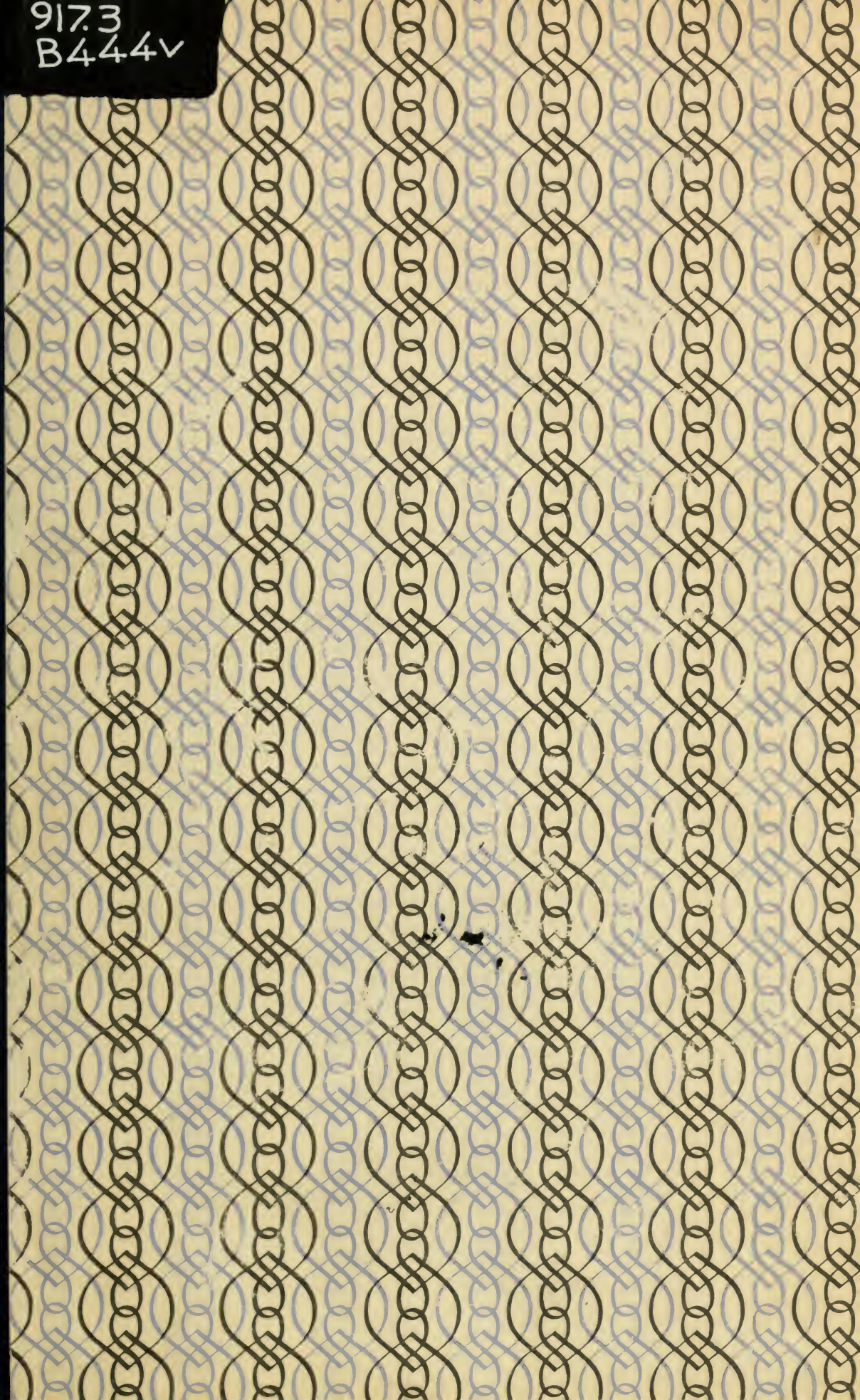


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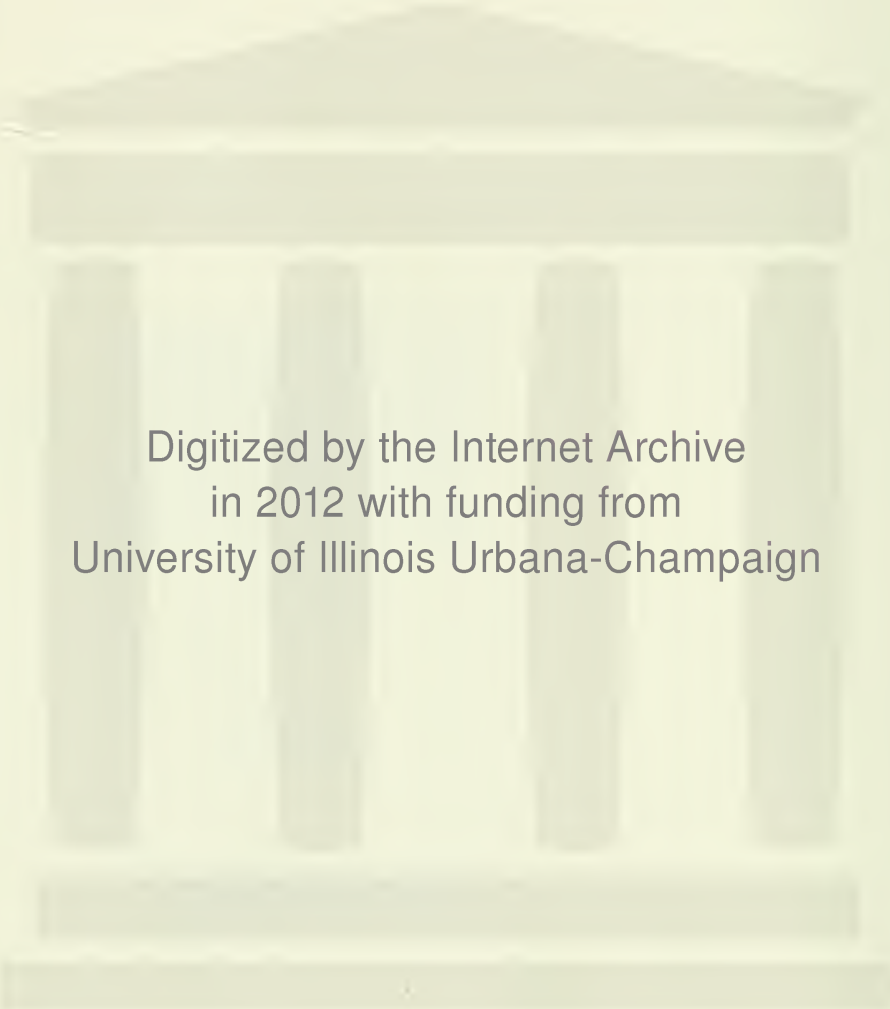
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*A Visitor to Chicago  
in Indian Days*





# *A Visitor to Chicago in Indian Days*

“JOURNAL TO THE ‘FAR-OFF WEST’”

By Colbee C. Benton

*Edited by Paul M. Angle and James R. Getz*

*Chicago*

THE CAXTON CLUB

1957

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## *Author Identified*

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SEVERAL YEARS AGO the Chicago Historical Society acquired a ninety-nine page manuscript entitled "Journal to the 'Far Off West.'" The author had traveled from Vermont to Chicago in the summer of 1833, and had then made an extensive tour of the Indian villages in the vicinity. The "Journal" was a day-by-day account of his experiences.

Reports of journeys from New England to what was then called the "West" are common, and our traveler's narrative of this part of his trip, while detailed and lively, could hardly be called superior to several that have long been available. But the second part, dealing with the Indians of southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois on the eve of their removal beyond the Mississippi, was and is unique. Impressed by this feature, the Publications Committee of the Caxton Club decided, with the consent of the Trustees of the Chicago Historical Society, to make the "Journal" a Caxton Club publication.

There was, however, one drawback. The author had failed to sign his manuscript or in any other way reveal his identity. Yet the document contained a number of clues of the kind which almost always lead to identification. In Waterford, New York, for example, our traveler had called on a Mr. Amsden, and in Troy he had visited J. H. Howe and a man named Mann, both of whom he described as old friends. A little research would undoubtedly reveal the former residence of all three, and knowing that, we could almost count on turning up the name of our author. But even if these and other clues led nowhere, the "Journal" had sufficient intrinsic importance to justify its publication.

The editors set about the business of annotating the text, confident that

in the process the name of the author would be disclosed. In due time the annotation was finished, but to our consternation the writer remained completely unknown. The printer was clamoring for copy—politely, to be sure, but nevertheless clamoring—so we had no choice but to admit our failure. We wrote a preface which contained the following passage:

“Together, we have exhausted our ingenuity in libraries, and one of us has traveled two thousand miles in an effort to identify the persons whom our unknown traveler mentioned as friends or acquaintances. At various times we have held hypotheses, but none has withstood critical scrutiny. Unless some relevant bit of information comes to light unexpectedly, our author must remain without a name.

“The one productive clue comes at the very end of the journal, where reference is made to ‘Doct. Whipple, who was once one of our representatives in Congress.’\* Thomas Whipple, Jr., a physician of Wentworth, New Hampshire, served in the House of Representatives from 1821 to 1829. Our traveler’s mention of Whipple’s unsteady habits would indicate proximity of residence. Wentworth is a village in the west central part of the state twelve miles east of the Connecticut River. In all probability, the author lived in this vicinity. . . .

“Beyond the general locality of our traveler’s residence, we can be certain of only two facts. His journal proves that he was well educated for his time, and his willingness to compete with the Indians in foot races is evidence that he was young. All else is inference. The absence of comparisons with other places would seem to indicate that he had not traveled beyond his own corner of New England, and the lack of reference to a wife, coupled with his occasional romantic dreamings, would label him a bachelor.”

But Mr. Getz refused to give up. At his instance we decided to withhold our preface until the printer had set the main body of the book. While that was being done, Mr. Getz made another trip to New England. He hoped that our traveler had written letters home while on his trip, and

\*See *post*, p. 116.

that one or more of them had found their way into the newspapers of the neighborhood in which we were certain he had lived. Accordingly, Mr. Getz examined the newspaper collections of the New Hampshire and Vermont state historical societies, and also that of the Baker Library at Dartmouth College. Once more, he drew a blank.

Well, not quite a blank. In the Danville, Vermont, *North Star* for September 9, 1833, he found a personal notice: Major James H. Howe of Troy, New York, had recently married Miss Charlotte W. Wright of Montpelier, Vermont. Here, suddenly, one of our clues came to life. We had hunted hard for J. H. Howe, but had been unable to find anything about him until this chance discovery of the marriage notice. A Howe family history disclosed that this same James H. Howe had lived in Lebanon, New Hampshire, before moving to Troy. Lebanon, one could assume, was our traveler's place of residence.

But this assumption was soon made questionable by a bit of information from a Mann family history, which Mr. Getz located on this same trip. The author of the "Journal," it will be recalled, had also visited a Mr. Mann in Troy. The Mann genealogy stated that two brothers, Timothy and Russell Mann, had left Orford before 1833 to engage in business at Troy, and the text made clear that Russell was the one whom our author had called on there. Since he and Mann were old friends, Orford seemed to be an even more likely place of residence than Lebanon.

At the same time that Mr. Getz was running down Howe and Mann, he was pursuing another lead. His investigations had aroused the interest of several local historians. One suggested that the Kendrick family offered possibilities. In the 1830's the Kendricks had kept a store, and had been people of substance and education. Information about the Kendricks could be found in a collection of notebooks which the Rev. Charles A. Downs, author of a history of Lebanon, had donated to the public library.

From the notebooks Mr. Getz learned that Stephen Kendrick had founded the first store in Lebanon. As the town grew, Kendrick prospered. He raised a large family, and had the satisfaction of seeing his sons achieve



solid, respectable positions. One became the town druggist, one a banker, one headed a railroad company, two were college professors. Interest, however, centered in the oldest son, Stephen, Jr., who, according to the notes, had "gone west and died there."

Here, certainly, was a strong candidate. In Kendrick's favor was the fact, which the Rev. Mr. Downs' notes yielded, that James H. Howe of Troy was a cousin. Opposing the presumption was Kendrick's age. Born in 1798, he would have been thirty-four or thirty-five in 1833, and that was somewhat older than we had taken our author to be.

The Downs notes included a series of clippings of articles which a Colbee C. Benton had written for the *Granite State Free Press*, of Lebanon, in the early 1870's. All were reminiscences of Lebanon in the author's boyhood and youth. One described a dancing school which he had attended. Stephen Kendrick, Jr., had taken lessons in the same group, and Russell Mann had come from Orford to attend. This accounted for the boyhood friendship between our traveler and Mann, and solved the bothersome problem of Mann's residence in Orford.

Mr. Getz assumed that he had come to the end of his quest. In all probability Stephen Kendrick, Jr., was the author of the "Journal to the 'Far Off West.'" But the Benton reminiscences were interesting, and my co-editor had plenty of time. He continued to read. In a few minutes he came to an article from the *Granite State Free Press* for February 21, 1873, which contained this passage:

"Another school teacher was Manley Amsden, a son of Joseph Amsden, and a brother of Uriah and Joel. He taught in 1811 and proved one of the best teachers. Soon after, he went to Waterford, N. Y., where he made teaching a business and became celebrated in that part of the country. He lived a bachelor for some years but after a little figuring he worked out an interesting problem in a rich young widow's heart, by the name of Van Alstine, which resulted in the possession of a good wife, her young daughter, and a fine Dutch farm. The writer visited them in 1833. . . ."

Here, with no advance warning whatever, was the answer. In Water-

town our hitherto nameless traveler had called on a "Mr. Amsden," and had been favored with music and singing by "Miss Van Alstine."\* So the author of the anonymous journal was not Stephen Kendrick, Jr.: he was Colbee C. Benton!

Benton's reminiscence continued: "... in their [the Amsdens] 'house at home' which was a great wonder to him. The rooms were finished wholly in wood, with massive beams overhead, looking much like a prison; but the furniture was beautiful, and of the richest old Dutch style." Here was further confirmation, for our traveler, in his journal, had marvelled at the beauty of the Amsden home and had described it in detail.

Biographical data in the Lebanon Public Library clinched the identification. One source stated that Colbee C. Benton had made a trip to the West in 1833, and had spent a week among the Indians at that time. The same source asserted that Benton had traveled 800 miles, alone in a dugout, on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Whether this was a continuation of the trip to the "Far Off West" we do not know. We wish we could explain the abrupt termination of the "Journal," but we cannot. It is our hope that Benton kept a record of his adventures after the "Journal" stopped, and that this publication will be instrumental in bringing the manuscript to light.

As for Benton the person, we resort to an obituary notice which appeared in the *Granite State Monthly* for January, 1881.

"Col. Colbee Chamberlain Benton, son of William Benton, was born in Langdon, N. H., Jan. 23, 1805. At an early age his parents moved to Lebanon, where the greatest part of his long and well-rounded life was passed. At the early age of twenty years (1825) Col. Benton engaged in the mercantile business for himself, with a capital of \$147.50, the accumulation of his boyhood. Thrift and foresight were attended by prosperity, and in the prime of manhood he retired from active business with a competency, and devoted the remainder of his life to his favorite studies, congenial pursuits and travel. He was never idle. He took great interest in the organization of the Northern Railroad, assisting in the preliminary survey, and

\*See *post*, p. 20

urging before the legislature the granting of its charter and right-of-way. He served his town as selectman two terms, and was always an active advocate of the principles of his own political party, leaving the offices to his party associates. His leisure was devoted to the study of nature; horticulture, botany, mineralogy and geology receiving attention, as shown by the large and valuable collection of botanical and mineral specimens which he has left. Local history and genealogy were also favorite studies with him, and his active pen has left on record many of his researches. He was identified with the militia organizations of the state, receiving his rank, however, from the State of Vermont, during a temporary residence in that commonwealth. Col. Benton was an active, earnest, well-informed, conscientious and modest man. He affiliated with the Unitarian Church, in which denomination he was deeply interested. In 1841 he married Susan A. Wright, of Norwich, Vt., who survives him. She was his companion on his journeys and coadjutor in his studies. Their children, four in number, are buried in their family lot. Col. C. C. Benton died very suddenly in Boston, February 22, 1880. His memory will long survive."

Through the publication of the "Journal," Mr. Benton's memory will doubtless survive longer than his memorialist expected—a prospect which both Mr. Getz and I find very gratifying.

PAUL M. ANGLE.

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In preparing the "Journal to the 'Far Off West'" for publication we have exercised our editorial prerogatives with restraint. For the benefit of the present-day reader we have made occasional changes in spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing, but we have not carried the process far enough to take away any of the flavor of the original. Certain passages which seemed to be of no interest or importance have been deleted, as indicated by elision marks.

Mr. Angle is responsible for the notes covering Benton's trip to Chicago; Mr. Getz for those which relate to the author's tour of the Indian country.

P. M. A. and J. R. G.



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## Journal to the "Far-off West"

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*Friday, July 12th* [1833] ☞ Today has been delightful—*delightful* because of the bright sun—the deep blue sky—the pure fresh air and the gentle breeze. Yet, the beauty of so lovely a day has not dispersed the melancholy sensations which have gathered upon my heart. It can not banish the regret of parting from friends and of leaving "home sweet, sweet home." *No*, it is not the *bright sunshine* of a *day* that will lighten the sadness of regret, or make us *happy* to say *farewell* to friends—to home—to the delightful streams and beautiful meadows—to the sweet and lovely flowers—to the green woods—the rich scenery—the rugged mountains and the bright green hills. We love them all *too* well to be happy to leave them, or ever to forget them, and we can not say *farewell* without sad and melancholy feelings.

The occurrences of the day have not been *very singular*. Had a carriage not crowded—a good driver and speedy horses. Passed through Windsor and dined in Charleston at the very fashionable hour of 4 o'clock P.M.\* Stopped at Springfield V.T. a very thriving place, and one of considerable business. The hills seem to rise almost perpendicular from the village and

\*One would infer that Windsor, Vermont, was the first place of consequence through which our traveler passed. According to a contemporary, "the village contains about 125 dwelling houses. It is rather compactly built, and several of the houses are elegant. The place is much adorned with trees and shrubbery, which, united with the hill prospect around, and a fine view of Ascutney mountain, which lies three miles southwest of it, render it one of the most pleasant villages in this part of the country." Zadock Thompson, *History of Vermont, Natural, Civil and Statistical* (Burlington, 1842), Part III, pp. 195-96.

"Charleston" was undoubtedly Charlestown, New Hampshire, on the east side of the Connecticut River twelve miles south of Windsor.

give it quite a romantic appearance—and there are some falls on the little stream that passes through the centre of the village which are quite a curiosity.\* The water has worn out a deep cavity in the rock where it dashes along its narrow channel with great force and a thick spray is raised from which I beheld a beautiful rainbow.

Arrived at Chester about sunset. Here we had six horses attached to the coach, but unfortunately the leaders were lazy and the driver's whip too short.† However, a remedy was prepared. The footboard was loaded with stones and dealt out as occasion required—and after trying all the virtue there is in stones, with much whipping—we succeeded in reaching Landsgrove about 12 at night. A dish of milk was soon disposed of—and a bed found.‡

*Saturday 13th* ☞ Was called about three o'clock—not a very agreeable hour for a person of my habits. The morning cold and chilly and very uncomfortable indeed, which, with the rough and hilly road, made it seem almost forever getting down the mountain, to Manchester, where we took breakfast. The breakfast was decent, but the waiter did not know which end he stood on—no more did the Landlord, for he undertook to make some excuses out of *pure* affectation I presume, and he had so many stops and starts—so many colons and semicolons without ever coming to

\*The "little stream" was the Black River. Of its falls Thompson wrote: "These falls amount to 110 feet in an eighth of a mile, 50 of which are nearly perpendicular, and they are regarded as one of the greatest curiosities in the state. . . . The village and all the scenery about is highly romantic and interesting." *History of Vermont*, Pt. III, 163-64.

†Chester was an important junction point. "The line of stages from Boston to Montreal, and from Hanover and Charlestown, to Saratoga and Albany, intersect in this village. The road from Chester to Manchester, is considered the best passage of the Green Mountains in the state, south of Montpelier, and renders this village the great thoroughfare for the travel from Maine and New Hampshire, to the state of New York, and particularly to Saratoga and Ballston springs." Thompson, *History of Vermont*, Pt. III, p. 54.

‡Landsgrove, a post town a little more than halfway between Chester and Manchester.

a period, that I could not understand him. The morning ride had given me a very good appetite and with the greedy assistance of some friends and fellow travellers, the Toast, Beefsteak and eggs was disposed of with surprising celerity—and there stood the *poor landlord* trembling with wonder and astonishment, and *there* he remained, choaked with unintelligible apologies until we called for the bill, which immediately brought him to his senses, and *we* to ours.—Manchester is rather a small old looking town, situated down between the hills and does not seem to have much support, unless from a Seminary lately established.\* The building is of marble, three stories high, and is very pleasantly situated on an eminence west of the village. It commenced in May last and already has one hundred scholars. Ten thousand dollars was given by an inhabitant of the Town, whose name it bears, provided the same amount could be raised by other donations or subscriptions. It has been done which taken together makes an ample fund.†

The next Town, Arlington, remembered only for its beautiful Episcopalian meetinghouse. I had an opportunity to go into it, and I think it the prettiest meetinghouse that I ever saw.—It has an elegant organ, which was presented by an individual and cost seven hundred dollars.‡ Dined at Cambridge, N. York, an old looking village and surrounded by a rich and

\*Thompson gave Manchester a somewhat more substantial character. "It contains a bank, a jail erected in 1787 in connexion with a court house, an academy, built in 1818, an elegant brick court house built in 1822, a meeting house, the Burr seminary, several stores, taverns, mechanics' shops, &c." *History of Vermont*, Pt. III, 109.

†The seminary owed its existence "to the munificence of Joseph Burr, Esq., who resided many years at Manchester, and by patient industry and an upright course of business, accumulated property estimated, at the time of his death, which took place April 14, 1828, to amount to \$150,000." The school opened on May 15, 1833, and had 146 students in its first term. Of these "a large proportion were professors of religion, and had in view the preparation for the gospel ministry." Thompson, *History of Vermont*, Pt. II, 168.

‡St. James' Church, founded before the Revolution. "In 1831 a new and elegant stone church was erected at a cost of \$10,000." Thompson, *History of Vermont*, Pt. III, 4.

fertile country. Passed through Union Village which has a very lively and brisk appearance—and is growing very fast.\* Soon after, had a view of the Hudson river for the first time and crossed it in a horse boat. Remained a short time at Schylerville, a small village in Saratoga on the Hudson, celebrated for its being the place where Burgoyne delivered up his army in the time of the Revolution. An old dry tree now marks the ground on which he surrendered and I had a view of the spot where the entrenchments were on the river bank. I purchased two bullets which were lately picked up on the battle-ground.†

From this to the springs is through a very barren country and thinly inhabited. Arrived about sunset. Stopped at Congress Hall. Was shown into a room—read the rules & it needed but a glance for a decision. Naked walls—a little narrow room—a little narrow bed—and a little too hard by—a great deal. No carpet and a great ways to travel to find so little—and last tho' not least, the very modest price of two dollars per day. I made a proper excuse and had my baggage removed to the Rail Road House, a decent kind of a thing, *and then again not so decent.*

*Sunday, 14th* ☞ I left my bed at a late hour, somewhat refreshed after having been deprived of sleep for two days. After breakfast went to the different springs and *tasted*—but the water was not very sweet. However, I succeeded in drinking three tumblers of the Congress Water, and I find my health very much improved. Soon no doubt I shall be able to proceed on my journey to the “far west.”

Saratoga is rather a pleasant place, but the country immediately about

\*Union Village is the present Greenwich, a small town on the Battenkill River six miles east of the Hudson.

†Saratoga is the township, and Schuylerville, in Benton's time, was the principal village.

After the two battles of Freeman's Farm, September 19 and October 7, 1777, General Burgoyne found himself in a hopeless position and began to retire northward. At Schuylerville, with fewer than 3500 men ready for duty, he was surrounded by 17,000 American regulars and militia under General Gates. Burgoyne surrendered on October 17.



it is barren and sandy. There are many fine Hotels—Concert Hall is an elegant building and very pleasantly situated near to Congress Springs. United States Hotel is a noble building on the north side of the street and near to the rail road. The Pavillion is also a fine building and delightfully situated. Union Hall opposite Concert Hall is a very fine place. Columbian Hall and many other fine Hotels. And the street at this time is very pleasant and lively.

The accommodations about the springs are ridiculous, considering the celebrity they have acquired. One would think that Saratoga was a paradise and that it had every comfort and convenience, but it will soon be perceived by observation, to be far otherwise. They have commenced making some improvement at Congress Springs and it is possible that the enterprise of the proprietors may make it decent and perhaps respectable. I think it very strange that they have neglected it so long; but the truth is they are a lot of shavers and sharpers, destitute of all public spirit & of shame and pride. Think that a "penny saved is two pence earned" and thus neglect their duty to gratify a mean and niggardly disposition. There are some delightful groves of pine, but they are improved for 'nine pin alleys'—'Billiards'—'Wheels of Fortune,' cards and all sorts of gambling.\*

\*In 1840 Saratoga Springs boasted six churches, several "literary institutions," and 2,000 inhabitants. Its fame, however, derived from its springs. "These are situated on the margin of a vale, bordering the village on the east, and are the continuation of a chain of springs discovering themselves about 12 miles to the south, in the town of Ballston. The springs in this vicinity are 18 or 20 in number, the principal of which are the Congress, the Iodine or Walton, Putnam's, Congress, the Monroe, the Hamilton, the Flat Rock, the High Rock, the Columbian, and the Washington. . . . The hotels in this place are numerous, and some of them truly elegant, built in good taste, with spacious piazzas, and yards ornamented with shrubbery." Barber & Howe, *Historical Collections of the State of New York* (1841), 498-99.

Robert J. Vandewater, writing at the time of Benton's visit, added: "Amusement is always to be found during a sojourn here. Besides that which arises from the contemplation of the various shades of character with which the crowded scene is enlivened, the library, the reading-rooms, the billiard-rooms, and dancing, which seems to prevail among the fashionable invalids, afford all the opportunities for killing *Time*—that arch enemy—which could be desired." *The Tourist, or Pocket Manual for Travellers* (Third Edition, New York, 1834), 94.



This afternoon when returning from a walk witnessed a real case of “‘salt and battery.” A negro woman pounding a white woman over the head with an umbrella and with all the power and might she had. The white succeeded in escaping from her and run through a narrow passage between some buildings. The black followed and many gentlemen followed to prevent further trouble. The black again smote the white, and the gentlemen interfered. The white escaped, running down street with great speed, and such an object I never saw before. Her face covered with blood, her hair flying in the air in all directions, her clothes all “tattered and torn” and she looked horrible indeed. And the wench, she was a complete picture of rage. She looked like a Tiger that had lost his prey. Her eyes rolled round like those of a beast in great agony and rage. Her nostrils swelled like those of a race horse, and she foamed at the mouth like a mad dog—and such a look of defiance, so terrible, frightful and horrible, *really* I could not but imagine myself in the presence of some infernal spirit of the lower regions of darkness.

*Monday, July 15th* ☪ I arose at an early hour, went down to Congress Springs, drank some of the water, took a position where I could view the different visitors as they approached like cattle to water, and it was a singular collection indeed. I was much amused with their appearance. A gouty old West India Planter would step up and drink a great quantity. The dark southerner would drink moderately. The whiskered Spaniard would dip a little, and *our Dandys* would sip a little, then draw themselves into an attitude and look a little. Some of the Ladys would sip a little. And some of these delicate beings whom no one would suppose could drink more than two or three tumblers of the water, I heard boast of having drank thirteen. They must have been made to inhabit some other part of the Globe, probably the dry and sandy deserts of Africa. I thought from their diminutive proportions that they must be great (or little) natural curiosities. It was all life and motion, coming and going, drinking and looking on. *No respect to persons, Gamblers, Pickpockets, Ladies and Gentle-*

*men* all came on equal ground and drank from the *same cup*, in *real republican style*.

At one of the springs, if a Fowl were to be held near to the water, it would become lifeless to all appearance, and as it was represented by the boy (who waits upon the visitors and has imbibed no small portion of a speculative disposition) it would die forever and the spectators had heretofore believed it. The boy said he would get a chicken for eighteen pence and the effect might be seen. The money was paid and the chicken extended near to the water, but it would not die. And the boy said, when off his guard that the chicken had died a number of times that day, and of course it had been sold as many times. (Any way to get money.) Dieing had become a kind of second nature to the chicken probably, and it was just as easy to die as live. The difference not perceivable.

*Tuesday July 16th* ⚡ Left Saratoga for Waterford in the stage. Passed through Ballston and drank water from the springs in that place. Ballston is a more businesslike appearing place than Saratoga. There is a fine Hotel in the place, said to better than any in Saratoga and the springs are more visited than formerly.\* The Railroad is carried across a hollow supported

\*“Ballston Spa is the resort of hundreds of travellers during the summer months. There are a number of springs in the vicinity, the waters of which are not unlike those of Saratoga. . . . Two of the springs are near Mr. Aldridge’s Boarding-house; and the U. S. Spring is at the east end of the village, near the Sans Souci Hotel. A large bathing-house is located near this spring, which is furnished with waters (for the purpose of bathing) from all the different springs in the vicinity. There is in the village a Court-House, two Churches, an Academy, and a Female Seminary; also a printing-office and bookstore, to which a reading room is attached.” Vandewater, *Tourist*, 91-92.

In the light of the claims made by an enthusiastic contemporary, the popularity of the springs is understandable. “The use of the mineral waters here and at Saratoga is especially beneficial in all those affections termed bilious and dyspeptic, in calculous and nephritic complaints, in chronic rheumatism, gout, in ulcers and cutaneous disorders, scrofula, in mercurial diseases and strumous affections, in recent dropsy, paralysis, chlorosis, &c.” Unidentified quotation in Barber & Howe, *Historical Collections*, 493.

by arches and has quite a splendid appearance. A caravan was exhibiting here, which called a great many people together, and we met a great many Dutch Waggons loaded with men, women and children going to see the great curiosities. Arrived at Waterford at two o'clock P.M. Dined. Put on a clean "Dickey" and walked up to Mr. Amsdens. Found the family in good health. Passed the afternoon and evening very pleasantly, and was detained till next day on account of a heavy shower.

*Wednesday July 17* ☞ This morning I arose at a proper time. After breakfast was favored with musick and singing from *Miss Van Alstine*. Walked with Mr. Amsden on to the hill west of his house, where we had a beautiful view of the rich fertile land in front, and of the river beyond. It is a delightful spot on the river. Mr. Amsdens house is quite a curiosity. Built in the Dutch style and has a very ordinary appearance on the outside, but when you get inside, you are astonished at the contrast. The parlour is rich and elegantly furnished and everything is in perfect order and neatness. The huge, uncovered beams have an appearance of peculiar *grandeur* when compared with a splendid Pianoe, a rich Carpet and elegant furniture, and I could not but admire the magnificent contrast—the novelty, too, and the appearance of comfort and happiness—and I had a delightful visit. After dinner Mr. Amsden and family and myself took seats in his carriage and rode to Waterford village. I had the pleasure of Miss Van Alstines company when walking about town, for which, I felt very *grateful*.

Waterford is rather an old looking place, but I should think it rather a pleasant place, were it not for the very filthy practice of letting their hogs run in the street.\* I walked to Lansinburgh, one mile, where I remained till evening. This is a much larger village than I expected to see. The main street

\*"The village of Waterford, containing a population of about 1,600, is pleasantly situated at the junction of the Mohawk with the Hudson, 10 miles north of Albany. . . . It is favorably located for trade, being on the lines of the Champlain canal and Rensselaer and Saratoga railroad. It also derives considerable importance from the navigation of small vessels on the Hudson." Barber & Howe, *Historical Collections*, 505-06. For Mr. Amsden and Miss Van Alstine, see pp. x-xi.



is very pleasant and [has] many fine buildings, and it has the appearance of considerable business.\* Left for Troy, which is only three miles, about nine o'clock, eve. Took lodgings at the "Mansion House." Met my friend J. H. Howe, talked over matters and things. Went to bed (and slept soundly).

*Thursday July 18th* ☞ A very pleasant day. After breakfast called upon my friend, who walked about the city with me, and back on to the hill where we had a grand view of Troy, of Albany below, and Waterford above, and of the Hudson river. Visited Mount Ida, about half a mile from the city which is quite a curiosity. The precipice is about seventy feet and almost perpendicular and at the bottom runs a rapid stream which has worn this deep channel in the rock. Visited the burying ground, which is a very splendid one, and it looks as if the dead might be happy there. This afternoon I spent in walking about the city, and I have almost fell in love with it. Many of the streets are delightful—beautiful shade trees and rich magnificent buildings. The store houses on River Street are the most elegant I have seen. The streets regular, and the whole has an appearance of order and neatness which far surpasses any city I have seen.†

\*"Lansingburg . . . is beautifully situated on the Hudson," three miles north of Troy, nine miles north of Albany. "The village is regularly laid out with capacious streets in squares of 400 by 260 feet, and is a place of considerable manufacturing and commercial business. . . . Three of the sprouts of the Mohawk enter the Hudson opposite the village, and the Cahoos [Cohoes] Falls are often distinctly heard in the stillness of the night." Barber & Howe, *Historical Collections*, 468.

†Troy's history begins with the year 1720, when the land on which the city stands was granted to Derick Van Derheyden. It was not until after the Revolution, however, that emigrants from New England, taken with the location, persuaded the then proprietors to mark out and sell town lots. By 1789 five stores and a dozen buildings had been erected. At that time the name was changed from Van Derheyden's Ferry to Troy.

Even the factual description of Barber & Howe does not completely obscure the small city's charm. "The city of Troy is regularly laid out, on a plan similar to that of Philadelphia. The principal street is River-street, which extends along the Hudson the whole length of the city, and is ornamented with many spacious and splendid stores. It is the theatre of a very extensive business. The remaining portion of the place generally exhibits the quiet aspect of the country. . . . Troy is in-

I called upon my old friend Mann, was surprised to hear that he had a wife and three children. It seems but a short time since we were young together, and I can hardly realize it. After tea, called upon a Young Lady at the Female Seminary and had a very agreeable visit. Was ushered into a sitting room among strangers, where I remained dumb and motionless as the rest of the company, and I felt a peculiar kind of awkwardness, which was not removed until the young Lady appeared.\*

*Friday July 19th* ☞ Left Troy this morning. Weather cool, but comfortable. Crossed the Hudson, and passed the United States arsenal which is a splendid lot of fine and neat looking buildings.† Passed the Van Rensselaer House an elegant establishment. A fine House surrounded by a great variety of the most beautiful shade trees and an immense quantity of shrubbery.‡ Stopped at the Western Hotel near the Rail Road. Im-

debted in a great measure for its prosperity to its advantageous situation, and the enterprise and industry of her inhabitants. She has extensively availed herself of the facilities afforded by the river and the Erie and Champlain canals. . . . Within the last few years Troy has increased rapidly in wealth and population. In 1820 her population was 5,268; in 1830, 11,566; in 1840, 19,373." *Historical Collections*, 472.

\*The Female Seminary was a pioneer in education for women. Founded at Waterford in 1819, the school was moved to Troy in 1821. Alma Lutz, in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, offers this appraisal: "In 1821, sixteen years before Mary Lyon founded her seminary at Mount Holyoke, Emma Willard's Troy Female Seminary received its first pupils; and it grew in popularity and in influence so that she was able to accomplish without state aid what a few years before seemed impossible. . . . Emma Willard was one of the great educators of her day. . . . Her Troy Female Seminary was looked upon as a model both in the United States and in Europe."

†At Watervliet.

‡"On the northern bounds of the city [Albany] is the mansion house of the late Stephen Van Rensselaer, Esq., the patroon of the manor of Rensselaerwick. It is almost entirely surrounded by a thick forest of trees, giving it an unusually retired aspect. "The name of this gentleman can scarcely be mentioned without a passing tribute to his merit. Blessed with great wealth, which so frequently leads to selfish egotism and exclusiveness, he has through life been distinguished as an active and efficient public man; bestowing his personal services and his fortune, to the encour-

proved what little time I had in travelling about the City of Albany. Visited City Hall, a magnificent building of marble. For a shilling was admitted in the Cupola, a spacious room which gave me at once a grand view of the whole city of Albany and Troy, and a delightful view of the beautiful scenery and of the majestic Hudson teeming with numerous vessels. The State House is built of a brick colored stone and has a very ancient and venerable appearance and there are many elegant buildings in the vicinity of City Hall and it is also the most pleasant part of the city. Go down into the lower streets and you seem to have fallen from a brighter world. It looks dark and dirty, yet it is very brisk and lively.\*

Left at ten o'clock and travelled by Rail Road to Schenectady through the most barren country that I ever saw.† When we stopped we could not

agement of every species of improvement in literature, science, and art. His name, as a benefactor, is associated with most of the charitable and scientific institutions of the state; and he has perhaps done more than any other citizen to foster agriculture and internal improvements.'" Barber & Howe, *Historical Collections*, 50, quoting Gordon's *Gazetteer*.

\*Albany deserves more space than Benton gave it. We amplify his description from the account of Barber and Howe. "The position of Albany necessarily makes it a great thoroughfare. The completion of the canals has given it a great commercial importance, making it the entrepot for a great proportion of the products destined for the New York market. To accommodate this trade, a basin has been constructed by the citizens on the river, in which all the northern and western canal boats are received. It consists of a part of the river included between the shore and a pier eighty feet wide, and four thousand three hundred feet long. . . . The basin has an area of thirty-two acres."

The City Hall was constructed "of white marble, hewed out by the state prisoners, at Sing Sing, and distinguished above all other edifices in this country by its *gilded dome*, like the Invalides at Paris. It was completed in December, 1832. In the rotunda of this building there is a statue of Hamilton, a copy of that by Greenough, in the Merchants' Exchange, destroyed by the great fire in New York, in 1835. There are also two designs in bas-relief, executed by W. Coffee, at the cost of the citizens, commemorative of De Witt Clinton and Sir Walter Scott."

The State House was "substantially built of stone, at an expense of \$120,000, of which the city corporation paid \$34,000. The hall of the representatives and the senate chamber, each contain full length portraits of Washington, and of several governors of the state." *Historical Collections*, 48-49.

†The Mohawk & Hudson went into operation in the late summer of 1831. Thomas



see out for boat agents, all talking at once, saying will you go in the "Telegraph," the "Senator," etc. I remained speechless and when I got ready to go I engaged a passage to Utica and left about five o'clock P. M. In the meantime I walked all about the town and back on the hill near the colleges, where I had a very grand view of the village and the country around.

Schenectady is an old, mean, filthy looking place. It seems to be principally inhabited by a swinish multitude, and the streets bear a near resemblance to so many cowyards and hogpens.\* A person is liable to be crowded from the sidewalk by a hog or of being carried off on his back, for they are the most independent, if not the greatest gentlemen that walk the streets. The Colleges are fine buildings situated on an eminence, which overlooks the village, and may be remembered as an exception to the rest of the buildings.†

S. Woodcock, who traveled over the road in the spring of 1836, has left an interesting description. "May 25th. Left Albany at 9 O Clock by the Railway for Schenectady, a distance of 17 Miles, for which 62½ cents is charged. We were drawn by Horses about 2 Miles, being a steep ascent. We then found a Steam Engine waiting for us (built by Stephenson and called the John Bull). The road is then quite level for 14 Miles through the poorest Country I ever saw. The sand banks are so loose that trees have been cut down and laid upon them, to promote vegetation and prevent the sand from drifting. The sides of the Road are plentifully strewn with wild flowers, amongst which I perceived the *blue lupin* in great abundance. We at length stop to have our carriages attached to a stationary Engine which lets us down an inclined plane, from the top of which we have a fine view of Schenectady and a part of the Valley of the Mohawk." *New York to Niagara, 1836: The Journal of Thomas S. Woodcock*, Deoch Fulton, Editor (New York, 1938), 7-8.

\*Barber & Howe corroborate our traveler after a fashion by remarking of Schenectady: "The city . . . in some parts retains much of its ancient appearance," while Woodcock dismissed it with a curt description: "It is built chiefly of Bricks and is in a low flat situation, and I think a place of no great importance." *Historical Collections*, 509; *New York to Niagara*, 8.

†Union College, Dutch Reformed, was incorporated in 1794. "In 1814, the trustees purchased a site on the rising ground overlooking the Mohawk valley, a little E. of the compact part of the city. Two edifices have been erected at this place, each 200 feet long, about 40 wide, 4 stories high, standing in a line 600 feet apart; a colonnade extending in the rear from each building 156 feet in length, by about 30 feet in width, and 2 stories high. The other college buildings are two boarding halls, farm-house, hospital-house, for a professor [sic], a number of tenements for ser-

*Saturday July 20* ☞ After leaving Schenectady it rained quite hard, but we continued to travel, it being of no other inconvenience, except to the horses and rider.\* When I awoke this morning I found myself in

vants, &c. The college has 6 professors and 4 assistant professors, and in its several libraries about 13,000 volumes. . . . There are here about 300 students." Barber & Howe, *Historical Collections*, 509-10.

\*A passage from Vandewater's guide book fits into the narrative perfectly at this point. "The traveller now resumes his tour upon the great Western canal, the most stupendous chain of artificial navigation in this or any other country. In passing for hundreds of miles through rich and fertile tracts, and over obstacles which presented almost impassable barriers to the great work of internal improvement, so boldly planned and perseveringly completed by the foresight, wisdom, and indefatigable exertions of Clinton and his compeers, the reflection will inevitably suggest itself, that the State of New-York has ample reason to indulge a feeling of pride in contemplating the beneficent results of the triumphant labours of those who planned and completed this monument to her public spirit and enterprize." *The Tourist*, 46.

Vandewater included a description of a typical Erie Canal packet. "*The Canal Packet-boat*, by which the traveller to the west continues his journey from Schenectady, is about 80 feet in length and 14 wide. A cabin in the forward part of the boat is fitted for ladies, with twelve berths, in a similar style to those of the steamboats on the Hudson. The dining-cabin is about 35 feet in length. The gentlemen's berths are not stationary, but are hung up in the dining-cabin at bed-time, by means of hooks fitted for the purpose. Back of the dining-cabin is the kitchen and sleeping-cabin for the hands." *The Tourist*, 50.

"The distance between Schenectady and Utica is 80 Miles," Woodcock wrote in 1836, "the passage is \$3.50 which includes board. There are other Boats called Line Boats that carry at a cheaper rate, being found for  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the price mentioned." *New York to Niagara*, 8-9.

Fanny Kemble, the English actress who had come to the United States in 1832, traveled west by canal boat in the summer of 1833 and enjoyed the experience. "I like travelling by the canal boats very much," she wrote. "Our's was not crowded, and the country through which we passed being delightful, the placid moderate gliding through it, at about four miles and a half an hour, seemed to me infinitely preferable to the noise of wheels, the rumble of a coach, and the jerking of bad roads, for the gain of a mile an hour. The only nuisances are the bridges over the canal, which are so very low, that one is obliged to prostrate oneself on the deck of the boat, to avoid being scraped off it; and this humiliation occurs, upon an average, once every quarter of an hour." Frances Anne Butler, *Journal* (Philadelphia, 1835), Vol. II, 183.

Sprakers Bason.\* Soon came Canajoharsie where we remained about an hour for some passengers. This is a small village, some respectable buildings. It is situated on very low land and the streets are a complete mud hole. I think that the inhabitants are a heedless and indolent set of beings, having no regard to comfort or convenience or they would improve the streets, as it would cost but little time and expense. There are some good flouring mills here and it is a place of considerable business.† The merchants keep large stocks of goods, much too large to all appearance.

Opposite this place across the Mohawk river, is a small village.\*‡ Fort Plain, the next village, seems to be improving quite fast. Two meeting-houses are now building, one Universalist, the other Presbyterian. Dwellings rather ordinary looking, and the streets muddy.‖ The next village of consequence between this and Utica is Little Falls. It is a very brisk and lively place, all life and a great deal of business doing. While the boat was operating through the Locks, I had an opportunity to view it, and it is a wild looking place.§ The village is on the north side of the Mohawk, planted upon a rock and is growing very fast.

The aqueduct which carries an arm of the canal across the river into the village is a splendid piece of workmanship and a great curiosity, and

\*Sprackers Basin, a small village a few miles east of Canajoharie.

†Canajoharie was only four years old when our traveler saw it. In 1840 it was credited with 100 dwellings.

‡Palatine Bridge.

‖Fort Plain took its name from a pre-Revolutionary fort erected for defense against the Indians.

§At Little Falls the Mohawk River breaks through the mountain barrier. Fanny Kemble described the scenery in prose characteristic of the time. "The day was breaking brightly, and the dewy earth was beginning to smile in the red dawn, when we approached Little Falls, a place where the placid gentle character of the Mohawk becomes wild and romantic, and beautifully picturesque. The canal is for some space cut through the solid rock, and the banks, high and bold, were crowned with tangled woods, and gemmed with wild flowers, and the delicate vivid tufts of fern. It was exceedingly beautiful; and though I believe I missed some part of the scenery immediately surrounding Little Falls, the approach to it, which is of the same nature, enchanted me extremely." *Journal*, II, 185.



the canal is a tremendous work, having been cut into the side of a rocky mountain, and in some places on the river side it is forty feet above the bed of the Mohawk, confined by a wall running perpendicular to the top. And on the other side the huge masses of stone overhang the canal and seem ready to tumble down upon the boats and crush them as they pass. The view of such a rough, uncultivated spot is grand and splendid, and the wildness of the scenery is beyond all description. Almost at one view, you can see the pretty little village of unhewn stone growing up among the rocks, the foaming waters of the Mohawk dashing along beneath your feet, the canal winding its course along the dark side of the mountain to the level, lifted by five Locks, the aqueduct, the huge rocks in the river, and the tremendous mountain of stone running high above the canal. A view so wild and terrific, so delightful and grand, so novel and romantic, cannot be imagined and *seldom* be found.\*

Passed the German Flats, which are beautiful land.† Passed through

\*"The falls extend upon the river about three fourths of a mile, descending in that distance 42 feet, and consist of two long rapids, separated by a stretch of deep water, occupying each about the fourth of a mile. . . . This waterfall would be beautiful anywhere; but it acquires grandeur here, from the high hills which confine it. . . . The defile is two miles long, with a medial breadth of one hundred rods. On either bank, the hill, on which deciduous and evergreen trees are pleasingly intermingled, rises from 360 to 400 feet, and the fall, over which may have once poured the waters of Lake Ontario, may have had a very little inferior altitude. . . .

"At the foot of the falls the river expands into a basin more than a hundred feet deep, into which the high cataract once poured its floods, and from whose depths rocky spires rise above the surface.

"A canal, with 5 locks, was constructed here by the Western Inland Navigation Company, in 1802, which now gives a valuable hydraulic power, and serves as a feeder for the Erie canal, with which it is connected by a noble aqueduct of marble, 214 feet long, 16 feet wide. . . .

"The canal descends the pass by 5 locks, 40 feet in the distance of one mile, and the time of the passage permits the traveller in boats to view, leisurely, the natural scenery and artificial improvements." Gordon's *Gazetteer*, quoted in Barber & Howe, *Historical Collections*, 197-98.

†Alluvial bottoms of uncommonly rich soil, settled at an early period by German families. "The land . . . is held almost exclusively by persons of German extraction who preserve the language and customs of their ancestors. This level region . . . is

Frankfort and London, small towns. Left Herkimer to the right and arrived at Utica at ten o'clock evening. Stopped at Shepherd's Hotel—Sam G. S. Houstin.\*

*Sunday July 21st* ☞ This morning I found myself in the City of Utica, and was much disappointed, for instead of a small place as I expected, I found a large city. It is situated on inclining land, and there are some splendid dwellings on the highest eminence, where you can have a very good view of the city and the rich country around it. The streets are fine, very spacious and perfectly neat, and the store houses are elegant, most of them on Genesee Street which runs through the center of the city at right angles with the canal and is a very pleasant street. Baggs Tavern at the lower end of this street is quite a celebrated establishment, and there are many other good Hotels on this street. John Street, Westminster Street, and Broad Street are all beautiful and very pleasant. I visited the Public Garden, which is a very pretty place but quite small. Saw one whole hog temperance house, *even* the wheelbarrow was marked "*temperance*"—upon the whole quite a steady place.† As to the business, I did

so famous for its fertility that nothing can induce the Germans to sell. It is valued at \$200 per acre, though the uplands can be bought for \$40. These Germans are enemies to all improvement, are very industrious, but not very cleanly in their habits." Woodcock, *New York to Niagara*, 9.

\*"The Canal Coffee-House, kept by Mr. Shepard . . . is at the packet-boat landing." Vandewater, *The Tourist*, 55.

†Vandewater credited Utica with a population of 10,000 in 1833—probably a close guess, since the census gave it 8,323 in 1830 and 12,810 in 1840. Woodcock, who passed through without stopping, said that it appeared to be "large and important." "We could see five Rows of Brick Stores," he wrote, "and the place had an appearance of prosperity." *New York to Niagara*, 10. Fanny Kemble came to the same conclusion, but from different evidence. She noted: "The gentlemen, I believe, went out to view the town, which, twenty years ago, *was not*, and now is a flourishing place, with fine-looking shops, two or three hotels, good broad streets, and a body of lawyers, who had a supper at the house where we were staying, and kept the night awake with champagne, shouting, toasts, and clapping of hands: so much for the strides of civilization through the savage lands of this new world." *Journal*, II, 186.



not have an opportunity to judge, it being Sunday. But the flourishing appearance denotes it a place of great business. And the country around as far as the eye can see is another evidence of a great business. *But few hogs in the streets* (credit).

Left Utica in the 10 o'clock stage for Syracuse—very warm indeed. Passed through New Hartford, a small manufacturing town and thro' Manchester, Vernon, Oneida, Lenox, and Fayetteville, all small towns. Also through Chetenago, a pretty, lively little place.\* Arrived at Syracuse at nine evening.

*Monday July 22* ☞ Very warm. I arose at an early hour, looked through the village, viewed the salt works and the aqueduct, supported by three arches, which carries the waters of the canal across the river. It is quite a pleasant and lively place.† The canal passes through the centre of the village as in most of the towns on the canal. After leaving Syracuse we came in sight of Oneida Lake and of Liverpool and Salina.‡ Passed

\*Accurately: Manchester, Vernon, Oneida, Lenox, Fayetteville, and Chittenango—a distance of sixty-one miles. The route ran south of the canal.

†A cursory dismissal of a thriving town. "Syracuse," Vandewater wrote, "is the most important place between Utica and Rochester, and contains about 600 buildings; among which are 4 churches, 2 very extensive hotels, one on each side of the canal, which is lined with lofty warehouses, giving it the appearance of New-York in miniature. The importance of this flourishing village is principally owing to the immense quantity of salt produced in the vicinity. Great quantities are manufactured from the vast number of springs by which the whole body of the soil is impregnated. The salt is manufactured by solar evaporation. The water is brought in logs from the village of *Salina*, about one mile and a half distant, and emptied into the vats, which occupy nearly 300 acres. The vats are all covered with light roofs, which are moveable at pleasure, to admit the rays of the sun upon the water, or to prevent the rain from mingling with it. The salt is removed from the vats twice or three times in the course of the summer." *The Tourist*, 56.

‡"*Salina* is about 1½ Miles from Syracuse, and as its name indicates, is a Salt establishment. The mode of evaporation here is that of boiling. Liverpool is about 6 Miles distant on the edge of the Lake (which is about 6 Miles long and 2 broad). These and other villages are solely employed in the Manufacture of Salt." Woodcock, *New York to Niagara*, 11.

through Camillus, Elbridge & Marcellus, and *Skaneateles*, a delightful village on a very pretty lake.

Arrived at Auburn at eleven A. M. and remained there till next day. It is a very handsome place.\* I was happy to find Gilbert and Trowbridge with their Theatrical Corps. I visited the Prison which is a great curiosity. It contains between seven and eight hundred convicts who are lotted out into different shops and kept industriously at work. Everything is kept in the most perfect order. Each prisoner has his place at work; at his meals and at night he is turned into his cell like a horse into a pound, and it is quite surprising to go through the different shops and see how so many can be so regularly engaged. Their appearance seemed to me like some mechanical invention or machine which was kept in motion by some well regulated power. The Prisons in which the cells are, are within another and all very large. The inner one is five stories, has five Piazzas running round it and is filled with cells. At an early hour in the evening the Prisoners are confined. The guard marches forward followed by the Prisoners in single file, leading round through the different Piazzas dropping them off one at a time into their lonely cells, returning, just bears upon an iron which tells him whether all is secure or not. There were some sorry looking fellows, but generally they looked very independent and careless. The Prisons are magnificent buildings and the whole is a tremendous work, and is no doubt the best, and kept under the best discipline of any Prison

Barber & Howe offer the following figures on salt production in the Syracuse region for the year 1839:

Salina	1,283,204 bushels
Liverpool	859,733
Geddes	249,245
Syracuse	472,558
	<hr/> 2,864,740

*Historical Collections*, 396.

\*"Auburn is one of the most thriving and beautiful villages in the state. Its principal streets are adorned with lofty buildings of brick and limestone." Barber & Howe, *Historical Collections*, 76. From Syracuse to Auburn, a distance of twenty-six miles, Benton proceeded by stage.

in the United States, and it is managed so as to be a source of considerable profit to the State. I spent about two hours and did not then see but a small part of it. For anything so extensive, to be kept so neat and clean, was almost astonishing to me.\* I became acquainted with some young men, and enjoyed the stay finely. Attended the Theatre in the evening which reminded me of days past.

*Tuesday July 23* ☞ Left Auburn this morning. Passed through Cayuga, a small town on Cayuga Lake. Crossed the lake on a bridge one mile in length. It is a fine lake, forty miles long and has a steam boat on it. Dined at Waterloo. Passed through Geneva on Seneca Lake, and Canandaigua on Canandaigua Lake, both the most delightful places I have seen. The lakes are fine, the water pure and clear as crystal, the buildings rich and elegant and the spacious streets, lined with beautiful shade trees, are lovely indeed. At Canandaigua is a Female Seminary in an admirable spot. It is a noble building, a spacious yard in front with numerous walks and a great quantity of shrubbery.†

\*The state prison was built in 1816 at a cost of approximately \$500,000. Originally it had 550 cells, and was later enlarged. In twelve months during the years 1838-39 the prison earned \$60,161.46 against expenditures of \$51,671.21. Barber & Howe, *Historical Collections*, 77.

†Fanny Kemble recorded her impressions of this identical journey in more romantic fashion than our traveler: "We proceeded on our way, crossed a bridge a mile and some rods long, over the Cayuga Lake; which however, was still so veiled with scowling mist and clouds, that we could discern none of its features. At about three o'clock we reached Geneva, a small town situated on a lake called Seneca water. Here we dined. . . . After dinner, the weather having become mild and bright, we went up to a piazza on the second floor, which overlooked the lake and its banks. The latter are very picturesque, and the town itself, climbing in terraces along the side of a steep acclivity rising from the water, has a very good effect. . . . After resting ourselves for a short time, we again took to our coach, and pursued our route towards Canandaigua, where we were to pass the night. The afternoon was bright and beautiful, the road tolerable, and the country through which we passed, fertile and smiling. As the evening began to come on, we reached Canandaigua lake, a very beautiful sheet of water of considerable extent. We coasted for some time close along its very margin; the opposite shore was high, clothed with



*Wednesday July 24* æ Arrived at Rochester three o'clock this morning after a tedious and unpleasant ride through the night. Walked through the city. Went into the Arcade (*a kind of a long entry*) where the Post Office is kept and where the Atheneum can be found. Had a sight of their dirty market. Went into their best flouring mills. Visited Genesee Falls where "Sam Patch jump't his last" (*poor fellow*), and they are well worth visiting. The water falls about seventy feet and the banks of the

wood, from amidst which, here and there, a white house looked peacefully down on the clear mirror below; the dead themselves can hardly inhabit regions more blessedly apart from the evil turmoil of the world, than the inhabitants of these beautiful solitudes. Leaving the water's edge we proceeded about a quarter of a mile, and found ourselves at the door of the inn at Canandaigua; the principal among some houses surrounding an open turfed space, like an English village green, across which ran the high road. My father, Mr. —, and I went up to a sort of observatory at the top of the house, from whence the view was perfectly enchanting. The green below, screened on three sides with remarkably fine poplar trees, and surrounded by neat white houses, reminded me of some retired spot in my own dear country. Opposite us the land rose with a gentle wooded swell, and to the left the lake spread itself to meet the horizon. A fresh breeze blew over the earth, most grateful after the intense heat of the morning, and the sky was all strewn with faint rosy clouds melting away one by one into violet wreaths, among which the early evening star glittered cold and clear." *Journal*, II, 202-05.

The more prosaic prose of Barber & Howe supports Miss Kemble's glowing description. Of Geneva: "The principal street runs parallel with the lake shore; the mansion houses on the eastern side in the southern part of the village have terraced gardens reaching down to the lake. Few, if any places in this country, can be selected, which present more attractions for persons retiring from business, who wish the enjoyments of a country life, combined with the advantages of social intercourse." *Historical Collections*, 409-10.

Of Canandaigua: "The residences of the inhabitants, and the tasteful manner in which their grounds are laid out, are, it is believed, not exceeded in beauty in any village in this country. Many of their mansions are large, splendidly furnished, surrounded by trees, commodious walks, odoriferous shrubberies, beautiful gardens and orchards adorned with flowers and fruits of various kinds, giving an air of wealth and refinement to this village rarely elsewhere to be found." *Historical Collections*, 404-05.

Of the Female Seminary: "The Ontario Female Seminary, founded by the subscriptions of the inhabitants, and incorporated in 1825, is an institution of high reputation. The number of pupils in 1839 was 174." *Historical Collections*, 405.

river below the falls are much higher, making quite a bold appearance. The canal is carried across the river supported by seven arches. Many of the buildings are of stone, taken from the bed of the river. St. Pauls Church is the most splendid one that I ever saw, built of stone, and a great deal of carved work. The steeple very high and all of stone. I am not well pleased with this place, but I think it is a place of business and may continue to increase for some time, for here is the best water power that can be found in the state.\*

\*Rochester impressed most visitors as a wonder city for reasons that are best set forth by Barber & Howe. "In the year 1810 there was not a house where Rochester now stands. The first allotments for a village were made in 1812, when Nathaniel Rochester, Charles H. Carroll, and William Fitzhugh, surveyed the hundred-acre tract for a settlement, under the name of 'Rochester,' after the senior proprietor. . . .

"The last war with Great Britain, which produced much distress in this frontier region, impeded the progress of Rochester to such a degree that the population at the commencement of 1816 amounted to only 331. By the opening of the Erie canal, Rochester became the great thoroughfare between the seaboard and the inland waters. On the incorporation of the village in 1827, about 750 acres were included within its limits. The city charter, in 1834, extended the bounds so as to embrace upwards of 4,000 acres. The staple product of the fertile valley of the Genesee is wheat, remarkable for its quantity as well as its quality. Its celebrity is increased by the skill with which it is prepared for market. By the immense water-power formed by the falls of the Genesee, Rochester is the largest as well as the best flour manufactory in the world. . . . The business part of the city is compactly built, and contains many splendid houses and stores four stories high. The east and west portions of the city are connected by several bridges, and by the great aqueduct of the Erie canal, upwards of 800 feet long. . . . Population in 1840 was 20,202." *Historical Collections*, 266-67.

Rochester was as famous for Sam Patch as for its flour mills. Sam's story may be found in dozens of books. The succinct account of Thomas Hamilton will serve as well as any. "The old proverb *de gustibus, &c.* receives illustration in every country. An eccentric man, called Sam Patch, having an aversion to honest industry, made it his profession to jump over all the water-falls in the country. Niagara was too much for him, but he sprang from a lofty rock, some distance below the Horse-shoe fall, with impunity. His last jump was at the fall . . . of the Genesee, in the autumn of 1829. From a scaffold, elevated twenty-five feet above the table rock, making a descent, altogether, of a hundred and twenty-five feet, he fearlessly plunged into the boiling caldron beneath. From the moment of his immersion, he was seen no more. His body was not discovered for many months, and was at length found



I left Rochester in the Packet at ten o'clock A. M. very much fatigued for the want of rest, and because of a little too much exercise. I was very unwell through the day and when night came on I had a burning fever. Arrived at Lockport about midnight. Concluded to stop here and study medicine for a time. Took lodgings at the Eagle Hotel,\* called for a Doctor and dealt largely in Calomel and Jallup.

*Thursday July 25* ☞ I don't feel any better for my new study. Fever all day. Called another Doctor, was bled, and immediately felt relieved.

*Friday July 26* ☞ Feel very weak today, not able to sit up but a short time. Am obliged to live on Porridge. It is well that I am not hungry.

*Saturday July 27* ☞ Not much better. Nothing but Porridge—Porridge—yet have been able to walk about some.

*Sunday July 28* ☞ I have got almost well; have walked about the village and walked down to the Lower Town, as it is called, which is considerable of a place. The Locks, which are five in number, raise up to the level sixty feet, and are a great curiosity. And together with the canal which is cut out of a rock forty feet in many places for three miles, it is the most tremendous work on the whole line of the canal and it is truly astonishing to see what a mighty work has been done.† Lockport is rather

at the mouth of the river, six miles below." *Men and Manners in America*, quoted in Myrtle M. Handy and Blake McKelvey, "British Travelers in the Genesee Country," *The Rochester Historical Society Publications*, Vol. XVIII, 56.

\*The Eagle Tavern, opened in 1832, stood on the north bank of the canal. Steps, well lighted at night, led down to a landing at water-level.

†Vandewater corroborates Benton. "This is the most stupendous work on the whole route. In 1821 there were but 2 houses at this place; now there are nearly 400, and more than 2000 inhabitants." *The Tourist*, 64.

Barber & Howe explain the mechanics of the locks. "The upper part of the village is about 80 feet above the level of the basin and long level of the canal. In moving up in a boat to the head of the basin to enter the chain of double locks,

an old looking place, but it is surrounded by a rich country and is growing very fast, and it is now a place of considerable business.

*Monday July 29* ⚓ Left Lockport for Lewiston in the stage. Passed thro' good land, yet it was not improved but a short distance from the road, and the dwellings were nothing but log huts. Peach trees in abundance. Passed through the land belonging to the Tuscarora Indians. Their settlement was nothing but a few scattered huts. They raise some grain, but they do not manage their work like farmers—more like boys. A missionary resides among them, but I should think that he had very little influence over their appetites and inclinations, if I were to judge from the appearance of some at Lewiston, where many of them had collected to see a caravan of animals. I saw not a few staggering through the streets and many at the groceries begging for more. They were the first Indians I had seen and I concluded (not feeling very well) to remain here till next day and gratify a little curiosity. They made it a kind of Holiday and were dressed in all their finery. I went into the caravan, but looked at the Indians most, as they were the greatest curiosities to me. I had been in some time before I saw the Elephant or the Camel or even knew there was any, I was so much interested with the natives. Some were dressed in a citizen's dress, some instead of a coat wore a blanket. Some wore hats and some were bareheaded. The Squaws generally wore a blue frock, blue pantaletts, and blanket or shawl, went bareheaded and barefoot. I saw one young Squaw who had a hat on with a blue sash round the crown, a double set of ear ornaments, and beads around her neck, numerous silver

which are arranged in the most massive style side by side, in huge chambers. . . , the gates of the lock are closed after the boat is in the chamber, and the roaring and sudden influx of the water from the lock above, in three or four minutes raises the boat to the level of the lock above; and this is repeated five times, the adjoining side lock being, perhaps, employed in letting a boat pass down the lock to the basin and canal. The boat having in this manner risen up 60 feet in five lifts, the passenger finds before him a vista of several miles, bounded on either hand by walls of the solid limestone rock, 25 to 30 feet high, and very appropriately called the 'deep rock cutting at Lockport.'" *Historical Collections*, 352.

ornaments about her dress, and some beautifully wrought moccasins. Some of the young Indians had their bows and arrows. Some of the Squaws had their little Papooses strung on their backs like a footman's pack, and they looked funny enough. I saw one little cunning looking fellow lashed to a board, with his little head sticking out, and I thought it a very convenient way of carrying children; and it is also very convenient if you wish to set them down or have them out of the way. They will stand like a chair at the side of the room, or lay like a log upon the ground, just as it should be necessary. And I think it a great improvement which the mothers in New England ought to know about.

Among the rest of the curiosities was a very large *White Bear*, and some very *pretty girls*. One of the girls at first sight resembled a friend of mine, but after a second look she was not half as handsome. Another had a very sweet and pleasant countenance. She looked so good natured and smiling, and there was such a lively expression in every feature, that I could not help but laugh when she did. (*O, the power of sympathy!*) I was not quite "done up" though. The Indians, the White Bear, and the pretty girls are the greatest curiosities I have lately seen.\*

Lewiston is rather a pleasant place, situated on the bank of Niagara river.† It has a small square on which is a large Academy building, and

\*This long passage is the first evidence of Benton's strong interest in the Indians, an interest which will absorb him completely in the final stages of his journey.

The Tuscarora reservation was located eight miles below Niagara Falls, three miles from the river. It consisted of eight square miles of very good land. "They [the Indians] consist of about 300 souls; have a Presbyterian church of 50 members, a resident clergyman, and a school teacher, and a temperance society of more than 100 members. They are under the care of the American Board of Foreign Missions. Their village is delightfully situated on a high bank, commanding an extensive prospect of the surrounding country and of Lake Ontario. These Indians came from North Carolina about the year 1712, and joined the confederacy of the Five Nations, themselves making the sixth. They formerly held a very valuable interest in land in North Carolina, but have recently sold it and divided the proceeds equally among themselves. Many of them are in very prosperous circumstances; in 1834, one man raised and gathered 50 acres of wheat." Barber & Howe, *Historical Collections*, 348.

†Seven miles north of Niagara Falls. In 1840 Lewistown had a population of 2,543.

there is only one street and that running from the square directly to the River. The Frontier House is a very good building, the rest very ordinary. Brock's Monument on Queenstown Heights opposite this place, is in plain sight, and I should have gone over and visited it had it not been for the rain. It is a superb structure and said to be one hundred and thirty-five feet high and sixty feet square at the base.\*

*Tuesday July 30* ☞ Very pleasant after the rain. Left Lewiston at ten o'clock A. M. After rising a long hill about two miles, we had a grand view of Lake Ontario, of Fort Niagara, and of Fort Erie on the Canada side, both at the mouth of Niagara River.† About four miles from this we made another stop to gratify curiosity & I soon found myself standing high above the foaming waters of the magnificent Niagara, on that tremendous precipice which o'erhangs the deep and horrid gulf called the "Devil's Hole." The grand and awful view from this astonishing height occasioned the most terrifying sensations. "*My knees smote together*" and I *almost* fell prostrate upon the earth.

This place is celebrated for its being the scene of a horrid transaction. A party of American soldiers, with a large amount of military property, were surrounded and surprised by a party of the British and driven, together with the cannon, horses, waggons, etc., on to this fearful rock, and there in one vast body crowded headlong into this terrific "hole."†

\*The monument commemorated the Battle of Queenstown Heights, October 13, 1812, in which the British decisively defeated American forces attempting to cross the Niagara River into Canada. The British commander, Major General Isaac Brock, was killed in the engagement.

†Fort Niagara was erected by the French in 1726. Taken by the British during the French and Indian War, it was not turned over to the United States until 1796. The British recaptured Fort Niagara during the War of 1812, but returned it to the United States at the end of that conflict.

Fort Erie was built by the British in 1764. Twice rebuilt, it changed hands several times during the War of 1812. In the summer and fall of 1814 American forces successfully withstood a British siege, and then destroyed the works.

†Barber & Howe, quoting an unidentified annalist, amplify this incident. "The visitor should not fail to visit the whirlpool in the Niagara river, 3 miles below the



A short ride brought us to Niagara Falls. Took lodgings at the "Eagle Hotel," where I had the pleasure of seeing the cowardly braggadocio James Watson Webb,\* the *bristled Pig here*, and the *whiskered puppy* there. Having such a great natural curiosity before me, induced me to commence my observations mechanically. I, therefore, walked down to the Falls on the American side and there viewed them from the river bank; next followed up the rapids to the bridge, and crossed on to the first Island, where a man stands with his hand extended for the fee of admittance (twenty five cts). I stepped into his office, which contains quite a collection of minerals and little curiosities, all for sale at very *modest* and *moderate prices*, but I did not feel inclined to gratify his avaricious disposition, therefore did not purchase.

On this little island is situated a very excellent Paper mill which I peaceably entered and examined without ceremony. The work is principally done by girls, who seemed to be very quietly and industriously engaged. The rooms were very pleasant and very neat indeed, which might

village. 'A mile from the whirlpool, the road runs within a few feet of the river's bank, where a deep and gloomy chasm is rent or worn out of the rock. This is called the *Devil's Hole*, and the small stream which crosses the road and falls into the chasm, is the Bloody Run.' In 1759, during the old French and Indian war, a detachment of 100 British regulars, who were conveying provisions, in wagons, to Fort Schlosser, were here surprised by a party of Indians in ambuscade. 'Many of the soldiers were killed at the first discharge, and the others were thrown into hopeless confusion. The Indians fell like tigers upon the drivers, tomahawked them in their seats, and threw them under foot. The wagons were backed off the precipice, and men and cattle fell with their loading in one dismembered and mutilated mass below. Some threw themselves from the bank, and fell mangled and dying on the rocks; others lodged in the branches of the trees, where they remained, disabled, until the affray was over, when the savages, at their leisure, despatched them.' The brook that courses the bank ran red with the blood of the slain. Only four escaped to relate the horrible fate of their companions. Pieces of wagons and other relics of this bloody affray remained in this vicinity until a few years, but have now mouldered away." *Historical Collections*, 354.

\*James Watson Webb, editor of the *Morning Courier and New-York Enquirer*, had already, at the age of thirty-one, achieved notoriety as a duellist. As an army officer he had fought two duels, narrowly missed several others, and, in 1827, had been forced to resign his commission.

be attributed partly to necessity, but more particularly without doubt, to a very commendable quality possessed by the girls. The water privileges on the rapids this side, are numerous, and the power is immense, and the expense of making the water serviceable can be merely nothing, and I presume ere long it will be quite a manufacturing place.

From this Island I passed on to Goat Island. Followed the walk to the first corner, where I had a grand view of the Niagara from the brink of this lofty eminence. A path extremely dangerous, so much so that a slip or a stumble would precipitate a person headlong on to the rocky fragments below, descended along the edge of the precipice a short distance to a foot bridge that led on to another little Island which divides the water immediately on the Fall. Here I had a good view of the American Falls, where the water breaks over and tumbles down upon the rocks.

Returned to the large Island, walked to the winding staircase and descended to a level with the roaring basin. I picked my way across the broken rocks near the foot of the precipice to the Falls. There I had an indescribable view of this wonderful and astonishing work of nature. It seemed a fearful spot—a giant Prison in some wild, terrific world. Behind me was an enormous precipice with a huge stone canopy at the top, which projected a number of feet and seemed to threaten my immediate destruction. In front was the troubled waters of the powerful Niagara passing rapidly away; on my right was the surprising falls on the American side, and immediately on my left was the tremendous falls on the Canada side. The mighty waters were pouring into this awful abyss with a deafening roar, a *roar* which seemed as if the whole Universe was trembling and rolling in one vast thunder storm. I remained here admiring this wonderful, powerful, and magnificent display of nature until the thick, damp spray warned me to leave.

I returned to the *everlasting* stairs and ascended to the Island, and after a little rest I visited *the most interesting spot about the falls*. It was on the farthest end of the foot bridge which runs about one third of the distance across the rapids from the Island and extends about eight feet over

this horriific reservoir. Here was the most splendid view that could be imagined. *Above*, the rapids which commence about two miles up the river and which fall about as much as the perpendicular fall, have an awful and imposing appearance. They look as if a world of water had escaped from its confinement far above, and was rushing along the rough descent with a maddening rage, roaring and foaming, and gathering swifter and swifter, and deeper and deeper and more rapid till it reaches the lofty height, and then it tumbles over and over, and rolls into the deep basin with a tremendous roar. Immediately, far beneath my feet, the waters were white with powerful commotion, and below the proud waters of the noble Niagara were moving swiftly towards the lake, strongly confined within its stupendous and massy stone walls. The whole above, below, and all around me, was one grand, sublime, and awful view—a view beyond the powers of description.\*

I passed the remainder of the afternoon in wandering about the beautiful and delightful scenery of the Island. Gathered some flowers. After tea, walked about the little village, which can hardly be remembered in connexion with so many great natural curiosities. There are two Hotels kept by the same man, not in very good order, and there is one elegant situation surrounded by beautiful trees and rich shrubbery, and in a very delightful spot. And there is one other very pretty, but the rest are rather ordinary.

At midnight, in company with many others, I went down to the Falls to take a peep at the "*Lunar Rainbow*," which was very clear and perfect. It is a sight which can not be seen except when the moon shines very clear indeed, and I think it can not be seen in any other place in the United States, *at least*, not in any degree of perfection or magnificence. . . .†

\*Fanny Kemble, on her first view of Niagara Falls, wrote one sentence: "I saw Niagara—Oh God! who can describe that sight!!!" and with that ended her journal. Most travelers, ours among them, failed to exercise such restraint.

†The elided passage consists of philosophical ruminations of no present-day interest.

*Wednesday July 31* ☞ Left Niagara Falls and passed through a country of log houses, eleven miles to a small, mean looking village on the Canal called Tonawanta.\* Then followed the Canal to Buffalo, passing through Black Rock, an old, threadbare place, not hardly a whole pane of glass in the village.† Saw some Dutch girls raking hay in an old swamp. They could hardly keep out of the mud and mire. Arrived at Buffalo about three o'clock P. M. and took quarters at another Eagle Hotel, which is the greatest shaving establishment in the western part of New York.‡ The accommodations are rather mean, the table hardly decent, and the attention nothing at all, but the price is beyond all modesty and sober calculation. It is a kind of swindling machine to pick the pockets of strangers who happen to get caught in it. However, I presume there are but very few who happen to get caught more than once, and if they are not ruined the first time they can "live to fight another day."

Buffalo is situated at the east end of Lake Erie, on land gradually inclining to the lake, and is very pleasant. It is growing very fast. Buildings going up in all parts of the City, and it would be hard to tell which part is growing with the greatest rapidity. A great deal of business doing, and much of it in the wholesale line. The citizens are "*gaping at gnats and swallowing camels*." They think that Buffalo is the centre of gravity for the whole of North America, and they think that its riches will be poured into it like sweet cider into a new rum hogshead. Some bankrupts and villains who have swindled a piece of land, seven by nine, are already grinning at an independence ahead, *already* rolling in riches and wealth in anticipation of the immense rise of land (poor fools). Yet it will and must be a place of business, but it never will, nor can it be, the head of the market.

\*Tonawanda.

†Vandewater disagreed. "Black Rock . . . is a place of considerable size, containing 700 inhabitants." *The Tourist*, 64.

‡A "shaver," in the slang of the time, was a money broker who purchased notes at more than legal interest. "Banks, when they resort to any means to obtain a large discount, are also called *shavers*, or *shaving banks*." John Russell Bartlett, *Dictionary of Americanisms* (Boston, 1859). In modern parlance, a gyp joint.



It will be a great forwarding place, and that will make it quite a City in time. The appearance of the inhabitants is rather unfavorable. Too much *shave* and *lather* about them to suit mankind in general.

The city is surrounded by a great swamp and is said to be an unhealthy place, and as long as the Canal is used, it must remain so. The location of the City is very pleasant indeed, and were it not for the country about, it would be remembered as much more pleasant.\*

*Thursday Aug. 1* ☞ A very pleasant day. After breakfast I took a seat in a coach and was carried down to the steamboat "*Henry Clay*."† En-

\*At Buffalo, Benton came to the end of the Erie Canal. The city had, of course, a brighter future than he realized. Its history illustrates the impetus which the completion of the canal gave to growth and commerce.

"Buffalo was originally laid out in 1801, by the Holland Land Company, on a bluff or terrace rising 50 feet above the water, and partly on the low and marshy ground extending from the terrace to the creek and lake. This marsh has been drained, and a large portion of the business part of the city lies upon it. The Erie canal from Tonawanda village is continued along the margin of Niagara river and the shore of the lake to the city. A mole or pier of wood and stone, 1,500 feet long, extends from the south side of the mouth of the creek, forming a partial breakwater, to protect the shipping from the gales which are felt here. For the better accommodation of trade, a ship canal, 80 feet wide and 13 deep, was completed in 1833, across the harbor near the mouth of the creek, a distance of 700 yards. A lighthouse built of limestone stands on the end of the pier. . . .

"From the time of the foundation of this place to 1812, it increased slowly. In that year it became a military post, and in December, 1813, every building in it was burnt save two, by the British and Indians. Many of the inhabitants were taken prisoners to Montreal. The place was soon rebuilt, and by 1817, it contained 100 houses, some of which were large and elegant. It was incorporated as a village in 1822, and, in 1823, had the courthouse and jail, and upwards of 300 buildings. It had then felt in advance the influence of the Erie canal, and much improvement was made in anticipation of the completion of that great work. In 1829, it had 400 houses and more than 2,000 inhabitants. It was incorporated as a city in 1832, and contains at this time [1840] about 2,000 houses, and 18,041 inhabitants. . . . The buildings, public and private, are generally good, many of them four stories high, among which are fine specimens of architecture." Barber & Howe, *Historical Collections*, 147-48.

†The *Henry Clay*, built soon after the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, was a

gaged a passage to Detroit and at ten o'clock A.M. left the City of Buffalo. Previous to my leaving, however, I saw a disgraceful sight—that of a female driving a yoke of oxen with a load of wood into the market place, where she stood, resting on her *hickory goad*, *gauping* about for a purchaser with all the masculine independence of a backwoodsman. She looked like a great, green, rawny boy, straight from the rugged hills, and I should recommend to her to dress like one for convenience sake if nothing more. But she was a beauty, a tall, rawboned beauty, as a “cedar tall and slender.” Her complexion deep and strong by constant exposure to the sun, a low forehead, deep sunken eyes, long nose, peaked chin, and upon the whole such a severe countenance that the sweetest expression would make the ferocious Tiger cower with trembling fear. Her dress was somewhat convenient for her business, rather ridiculous though, for her frock looked as if it was made and put on to her at the age of ten years, and had not been removed since (the space of ten or twelve years). Her arms were thrust through the sleeves of the garment some distance and very much exposed to the weather, and her *pretty ankles* were *highly exposed*, being destitute of the usual apparel of stockings, but her delicate feet were snugly ensconced in a beautiful pair of thick cowhide shoes. She seemed to be as much at home as any man and strided round with a perfect masculine *swash*. If I had seen her anywhere else I should have thought her a rawny mountaineer in *petticoats*, but I was not so much surprised to see this striking representation of refinement in the City of Buffalo, for I had

well known steamer. Although usually used on the Buffalo-Detroit run, its owners occasionally sent it to more distant points. Thus it was the ship which carried Juliette Kinzie, later to be famous as the author of *Wau-Bun*, to Green Bay in 1830, and it was one of the several ships which brought Winfield Scott's cholera-stricken regulars to Chicago in 1832, too late, and too ill, to participate in the Black Hawk War. When Mrs. Kinzie boarded the *Henry Clay* at Buffalo she was “highly delighted with the accommodations, which, by comparison, seemed the very climax of comfort and convenience,” but she soon learned that a lake voyage, even in one of the best ships available, could be a considerable trial. *Wau-Bun, The “Early Day” in the North-West*, Milo M. Quaife, Ed. (Chicago, 1932), 5ff. See also Quaife, *Lake Michigan* (Indianapolis, 1944), *passim*.

watched the dispositions of the mixed multitude and could see that their object was *money—money*, not having any regard for society. . . .

After raising the steam and getting all the passengers on board we left Buffalo. Passed out of the harbour alongside of the breakwater or wharf which "Uncle Sam" has been building at a very great expense. When we put into the lake the waves ran high, and as we proceeded the wind increased, and in the afternoon the wind was dead ahead and blew almost a hurricane. We succeeded in getting about forty five miles but we could not gain any, and was obliged to turn round and run back, or seek some place of safety. The waves run mountains high and frequently dashed into the bow of the boat, and it seemed to alarm some. I went on to the upper deck and for my own safety took hold of the mast rigging. Very soon the Captain ordered the jib sail to be hoisted, and the rudder "*hard up*" and we came tumbling round. It was "like going to heaven in a swing." At one time we were diving *headforemost* into a deep gulf, then again rising on to a high mountain; and when we were turning it seemed like "high and lofty tumbling." Everything that could be moved was overturned. The water ran across the deck, the females screamed sweetly, and all was a singular scene of confusion. There were a great many frightened but nobody hurt. We ran back with great velocity till within sight of Buffalo, and then doubled a little point on the Canada side and anchored till next morning. And there we rocked and rolled through a very long night. Not a few sick ones; but I escaped, except feeling a little *squaumish*. I never rode so majestically before in my life. It was grand indeed. The wind blew a heavy gale and we plowed a mighty furrow through the roaring and white foaming waters of the lake, and with such a degree of rapidity as I presumed never was witnessed before.

*Friday Aug. 2* ⚓ Weighed anchor at sunrise and proceeded on our journey, the wind having abated. If the happiness of a day is valuable or worthy to be remembered, which I do not doubt nor can not doubt, I am sure that I do not regret the gale, the danger, and confusion of yesterday,

for it proved a good opportunity for introduction. It was a peculiar kind of a scene, which warmed the heart, and without any cold and formal ceremony made us friends at once. I became acquainted with a number, among them a young lady from —, and the day was passed very pleasantly, at least most of it. We arrived at Erie, Penn. about four o'clock p.m., where part of our company left us, and with them the *young lady*. I was very sorry to say "goodbye" so soon, *but I did, notwithstanding* the effort, and the sun, which had been so brilliant thus far, became immediately darkened in a cloud (ominous). We did not go up to the town of Erie on account of the water being too shallow. A small steamboat runs from the wharf to the shore, which is about one mile, to carry passengers and freight.\*

*Saturday Aug. 3* ⚓ About midnight passed and stopped at Fairport, at the mouth of Grand River, and sometime in the night left some passengers at Ashtabula, Ohio. The Town is about two miles from the lake.† A little past sunrise this morning we arrived at Cleveland, Ohio, where we remained some time. I walked through all the streets, which are very pleasant indeed, very wide and very regular, and from some of the streets I had a beautiful view of the lake and the beach. This town is delightfully situated on a high bank from the lake and it is the prettiest place I have seen on the lake. The land is rich and fertile about it, and with its advantages—canal, etc.—I think it bids fair to make a very fine place.\* Touched at Huron and left some passengers, and then proceeded directly to Detroit, where we arrived about midnight. . . .

\*"Erie . . . is situated upon a bluff affording a prospect of Presqu'isle bay, the peninsula which forms it, and the lake beyond. The borough is regularly laid out with spacious streets; the site is level, the soil dry and porous; the buildings generally are well constructed, the public edifices, except the court house, are splendid, and in short, the town is one of the pleasantest in Pennsylvania." In 1830 Erie's population was 1451; in 1840, 3412. Sherman Day, *Historical Collections of the State of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1843), 318.

†Ashtabula, forty-five miles southwest of Erie, was reached first. Fairport, now Fairport Harbor, is twenty-five miles southwest of Ashtabula. In 1833 both towns were in their infancy.

\*Cleveland, incorporated as a village in 1816, was credited with a population of



*Sunday Aug. 4* ☞ I have taken up my quarters at the Mansion House, which place I find very pleasant and very comfortable. The day has been very warm and *muggy* and I have felt rather dull and stupid. I dressed myself for church and in company with a friend walked to the Episcopal meetinghouse. A very good seat was assigned us and I enjoyed the curiosity of the ceremony and formalities of the meeting very much. The singing was very good and I was well pleased with the preaching. The congregation were very respectable, appearing more *genteel* and *much more fashionable* than I expected to see. A company of United States soldiers occupied the first slips by the door, which gave the whole quite a martial appearance. I saw a very fine looking young lady in the slip forward of me. She looked at me and I looked at her. It was like the "jay bird setting on a limb—he winked at me and I winked at him." However, I was not *smashed*. I withstood the shock bravely, only experienced a little trembling of the nerves, which soon calmed down to their usual steadiness. . . .

This afternoon I remained at the Hotel—did not attend meeting. Since tea I have walked about the City and find it a much more pleasant place than I expected. The main street is very pleasant and many fine buildings on it, and the streets running west from the main streets are also very pleasant, and if there were shade trees and some better buildings they would be beautiful. The Court House is the handsomest building in the

1,000 in 1830, and 4,300 in 1834. Charles Fenno Hoffman, who visited the town in November, 1833, had this to say: "Cleaveland is very prettily situated upon the lake. The Cayuhoga makes a bend around a high bluff as it passes into the inland sea which receives its waters, and on the level peninsula thus formed is built the town. The harbour, naturally an indifferent one, has been much improved by running out a pier from either side of the river, where it debouches into Lake Erie; and there being now few better ports on this side of the lake, Cleaveland must become one of the most important places on its waters. . . . The town, which can already boast of a public library, a fine church, two capital taverns, and many handsome private dwellings, is laid out with broad streets and a spacious square in the centre. The business part is as yet beneath the bluff, where a single winding street runs along the bank of the river towards the lake; but the main street above is already the scene of much bustle." *Winter in the West* (New York, 1835), 98-99.

City and is situated in a very pretty square almost alone. The streets on the river side are muddy & filthy, and the buildings are mean.\*

I went down through the streets and they were filled with women, bare-headed and barefooted, and it looked odd enough to see women romping along the streets heedless of all appearances. The children thick as flies in a milk pan, boys fishing and in swimming and riding and sailing, guns firing, steamboats coming in and going out, and it was all hurrah! and I was almost amazed and astonished. I saw some very large pear trees which the boys and Indians were abusing with clubs without mercy. This evening I attended a meeting at the Congregational Church. The churches are

\*The history of Detroit begins in 1701 with the building there of Fort Pontchartrain du Detroit, which remained in the hands of the French until 1760. In that year it was surrendered to the British, who clipped its name to the single final word. The British held Detroit throughout the Revolution and afterward until the ratification of the Jay Treaty in 1796.

A census taken in March, 1834, gave Detroit a population of 4,968. "The French and their descendants still compose a large class, and their language is yet spoken to a considerable extent, but they are fast amalgamating with the predominant immigrant population."

"Detroit . . . is, to every appearance . . . of recent growth. Of the ancient style of the French buildings, scarcely a vestige remains. The city is mostly built of wood, and in a manner to accommodate its emigrant population, which it is supposed composes one-half or two-thirds of the city. Stores and dwellings of this class are often constructed upon leased grounds, and so constructed as to be easily removed; and it is a common occurrence to see one or more buildings removing from one part of the city to another, as the convenience of their owners requires. Although these temporary structures form no inconsiderable portion of the city, there are many permanent dwellings, not disproportionate to the number of *resident* citizens, built in a respectable style; and a few elegant private mansions. There are several extensive blocks of stores, constructed of brick, in a style and permanence highly creditable to the appearance of the city. Considering the enterprising and fluctuating nature of the great mass of the population, the city has altogether a cheerful and comely appearance . . . , and it has not a few outward indications of high cultivated taste and refinement."

"Western immigration has been a great resource of support to the city for several years past. Of this, Detroit has been the principal avenue, or rather the portal to the interior. It is the season of open navigation, usually eight months of the year, that activity and business prevail." John T. Blois, *Gazetteer of the State of Michigan* (Detroit, 1838), 279, 272-73, 278.

not very good buildings. The Roman Catholic Church has seven steeples, not very splendid though rather old.

*Monday Aug. 5* <sup>re</sup> Today has been very pleasant and warm, and it has been rather a tedious day with me. I made up my mind to purchase a horse. I was told that I could purchase cheaper in Canada. I went across the river and walked to Sandwich where the courts are held, called at a French house and looked at the ponies but could not purchase. Was asked to drink whiskey, but refused on account of *temperance*. Saw a very pretty French girl; she wore a large straw hat and seemed very willing to show herself.

It happened to be the day of the opening of the Court of Kings Bench and I was present in the Court House and heard the Chief Justice make his speech, which was a very good one. The attorneys wore black silk gowns, which are badges of office. The Chief Justice also wore a black silk gown, and a cocked up hat. The house was crowded—numerous constables with long poles about ten feet, to keep order. I was very much amused, as well as many others, to hear the crier repeat the names of the Jury as the clerk called them. He did not repeat one correctly, and could not on account of an impediment in his speech, and frequently the whole Court House was convulsed with laughter, and the Chief Justice was sensibly affected. He could not maintain his dignity nor gravity.

This Sandwich is a miserable place.\* I succeeded in getting a bowl of bread and milk for dinner and I felt very thankful for so much. Near the bank of the river is an old building which was used for a fort and the entrenchments are plain to be seen quite round it. I returned to Detroit to tea, without purchasing a pony.

\*Blois gave Sandwich a much better character than our traveler. The town was, he wrote, "very pleasantly situated on the east bank of the Detroit strait, three miles below the city of Detroit. It is the seat of justice for the county, and contains a post office, court house, jail, a catholic and episcopal church, one steam flouring mill, a carding and fulling mill, brewery, 3 taverns, 1 physician, 6 lawyers, and a respectable school. It is a small village, but beautifully located, has considerable wealth and some trade." *Gazetteer of Michigan*, 358.



*Tuesday Aug. 6* ☞ Today I have again visited Sandwich, but without any better success in the purchase of a pony. I might have been taken for a *Horse Jockey* of the *keenest* kind, for I was ready to buy, and was ready to try their horses. I rode them and drove them, more for the sake of fun than for anything else, for they looked so mean that I would not have one, and then they asked so much that I would not think of purchasing, but I enjoyed my new business wonderfully. When returning I met a man and wife. I hailed him and tried to buy his old mare. They got out of their old horse cart and I got in to see how the horse would travel. After running the horse some distance and back again, I told the man that the horse was too spirited and too speedy. I only wanted one that would travel three miles in three hours, and his would not answer my purpose for he would travel nearly twice as fast.

I returned again to Detroit after looking about the country a little. The land on the Canada side is very rich and fertile and very level, and it is a very delightful place up and down the river. Settled by Frenchmen, who do not manage their farms with any kind of judgment or economy. There is a store well filled with English goods which does a great deal of business. The Custom House officers in Detroit have been so strict that the business has increased on that side of the river. Some buildings going up. The conveyance is by steamboats which are constantly passing across. Distance about one mile.

This evening I have walked down the river on the American side and I find it very pleasant indeed. Some fine situations and beautiful gardens, among them Governor Cass's house, an ancient looking building fronting the river and having a delightful view of the river and the steamboats and vessels which are constantly passing.\* I have had a good opportunity to observe the business which is doing at Detroit, and I am satisfied that there are too many goods, and I find that there is a great deal of competition in business. The auction sales frequently lower than in New York City.

\*Lewis Cass, Governor of the Territory of Michigan, 1813-31. Though Secretary of War in 1833, Cass continued to maintain his Detroit residence.



*Wednesday Aug 7* After displaying considerable horsemanship in riding all the pacing, racking, and trotting horses on the Canada side, I concluded to leave Detroit. Today has been passed very pleasantly indeed. I left in a wagon with a young man from Ohio, who was going to Mount Clements, the county seat of Macomb County, where we stayed overnight. We passed the most direct road by mistake, and took the road which carried us up the river and along the beach of Lake St. Clair. We thought that there was "no great loss without some small gain," for we had an opportunity to pass through all the French settlements on the river and lake, and it was the most amusing day I have passed since I left home.

At the first house I enquired if they had a pony to sell, and I continued my enquiries, stopping at almost every house and going in to take a peep behind the screen. O, it was fun alive to see such a collection. Lots of children, some with nothing but shirts on, and some like old Adam and Eve before they eat of the forbidden fruit—not even a fig leaf to hide their nakedness. There they lay on the floor, kicking and rolling about like French horses fighting flies.

The French here are almost as black as the Indians, and they appear very indolent and slovenly indeed, and live in miserable log houses. Yet they have good farms, if they were rightly cultivated, and they might live completely independent if they had any *idea of independence*. As it regards *industry*, the women are in a measure an exception to the men, if I were to judge from a few instances which I met with. And those instances might be a good example to some of the young ladies of New England. I will mention them for their *express benefit* (should they be so fortunate as to see this), and they may practice if they choose. I am sure it would be gratifying to their friends and more particularly to their parents, and it would make them appear very interesting indeed. It was nothing more nor less than a full display of patient and persevering industry. The French girls who we occasionally met and passed—they were dressed in short frocks, straw hats with wide rims, and *their pretty feet were bare*, and as they walked along they were knitting with the utmost diligence, and so intent

were these industrious damsels to their work that I could not obtain even a nod. . . .

I called at one house where there was a large family of children, and they accidentally arranged themselves at the right of their father. They looked so interesting that I was constrained to ask if they were all his. He said yes, and asked me if I did not think it a large number for so young a man. (*I am sure I thought so.*) After passing the next house we were followed by an old woman, screaming and hollowing, wanting to know if we did not want to buy a pony, as near as I could understand. We went back but the pony could not be found. And so we passed the day. Gathered some shells on the beach of the lake, passed over a horrid road and arrived at Mt. Clemens about four o'clock. Dined and supped all under one. Here I tried a number of horses but they did not suit. Walked two miles to see one and I saw the prettiest one that had been offered to me. I offered forty dollars, and I "*rather think*" that I could have put him into my pocket, but he asked *more*, and I had no idea of giving him *more*.

This place, Mt. Clemens, is situated on Clinton river five miles from the lake, and it is quite pleasant, but it is new and but few buildings. A steamboat has been built here and a schooner is now building. The river is navigable to this place and but little farther. Subject to the "Fever and Ague." The land is very heavily timbered about it and said to be good. The United States road from Detroit to Fort Gratiot passes through this place, and it is a beautiful road. One store and one tavern. Most of the inhabitants from New Hamp.\*

*Thursday Aug 8* ☞ Today I left Mt. Clemens, passed through Utica in Oakland County. It is quite a pleasant place with a small water

\*"It [Mt. Clemens] is eligibly situated for ship building, and its facilities for that business, owing to its location and the convenient supply of excellent timber, enable it to be carried on to a considerable extent at present. . . . It stands at the head of navigation for vessels, and when a bar is removed at the mouth of the river, vessels of 80 tons may navigate the river with safety to Mt. Clemens." *Gazetteer of Michigan*, 329.

power and surrounded by decent land ten miles from Mt. Clemens. Dined at Pontiac, the county seat of Oakland Co., sixteen miles from Utica.\* It is considerable of a place and looks quite flourishing. There are two taverns, three stores, and some very good dwellings, and a small water power. A pedler tried to "hook" me in a French horse, but with all his assistants I was too old for him. From this place to Franklin is twelve miles through poor land and over a most miserable road. Stopped at a house to ask some unnecessary questions, and enquired of the children if their *Par* was at home. They stared and did not know what I meant. Says I, is your *Father* at home, with an emphasis. The mother at the same time appeared, and we were both so pleased with the ignorance of the children and her sudden and singular appearance that we could not speak and we were obliged to drive along without saying a word. Stayed all night at Franklin.† Two log taverns and one dwelling composed the village. Where we stayed the woman was discontented, and [wanted] to go back to the state of Connecticut and wondered why people should come to such a place, and I wondered as much as she did.

*Friday Aug 9* ☞ This morning I found a pony that suited me and I purchased him. He was a beautiful French pony and a fast trotter. I was obliged to give rather a high price (forty dollars) to get him, but I was determined to have him, for he is the only handsome one I have seen. Today

\*"At this time," an early settler wrote, "the country from Pontiac to Utica was quite thickly settled, although much of it was uncultivated. From Utica to Mt. Clemens was mostly a dense wilderness, with the settlers' cabins in the midst; some just beginning; others with a few acres cleared, but all struggling with the difficulties of making farms in a heavily timbered country. No roads, only as we found our way among the giant trees." Rev. Supply Chase, "A Pioneer Minister," *Michigan Pioneer Collections* (Lansing, 1884), Vol. V, 53.

The *Northwestern Journal*, April 21, 1830, credited Pontiac with three merchants, a sawmill, flourmill, woolen mill, an "ashery," seventy-five buildings, and 250 inhabitants. Quoted in George N. Fuller, *Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan* (Lansing, 1916), 221.

†As late as 1838, Franklin had only ten or twelve families. Blois, *Gazetteer of Michigan*, 289.

have called at almost every house to purchase a saddle, and hailed every man we met for the same purpose, but was not successful.

Called at one log house where the good fat woman was very sociable and told me how grandly they celebrated the *4th of July*. Her eldest son killed a buck, and her next killed a wild turkey that weighed 21 pounds, and her next killed *something*, and the neighbors all gathered together to partake of the feast, and such a splendid day was never before passed in Michigan. The *liberty pole* is now standing about *fifteen feet high*. Passed through very rich land and heavy timbered. Some fine farms in Farmington, settled by Yorkers. Arrived at Plymouth Corner, a small village. Two taverns and two bears, one tied to each signpost, and from my *knowledge of one* and the *appearance of the other* I thought that they had put out the most *appropriate* signs. There are three stores and two or three dwellings.\* Arrived to Ann Arbor at sunset, the county seat of Washtenaw County, a very pretty place and a place of considerable business.

*Saturday Aug 10th* ☞ This morning I purchased a saddle and portmanteau, and took what clothes I thought I should need for a journey to Illinois, and packed the rest in my trunk and sent it to Monroe. I rode about two miles from the village and purchased me a straw hat of a little Dutch girl that made it. I asked her where she was from; she said Pennsylvania, and I was quite amused with her conversation—so *very odd*. I returned and went down to the lower village, about one mile, where there is a good water power, a large tavern, two or three stores, and some other buildings for mills, etc. The upper town is much the most pleasant, and it is quite a delightful place situated high, and overlooks the country around. There are three taverns and five or six stores, and the buildings all look new and very neat, quite like a New England village.†

\*Plymouth Corners, now Plymouth, had an estimated population of 300 in 1838. Blois, *Gazetteer of Michigan*, 342.

†Ann Arbor, originally Ann's Arbor, took its name from the names of the wives of two early settlers, Mrs. Ann Rumsey and Mrs. Ann Allen. J. Q. A. Sessions, "Ann



After dinner I left *alone* to travel horseback through the Territory of Michigan. I have felt rather sad, but I am not of that sort who put their "hand to the plow and look back." I rode moderately along, and the first tavern that I came to was a log tavern. I called for a tumbler of milk for myself and some oats for my pony, and they had not got either, and for once, if I *never did before*, I left a *tavern sober*. After traveling about six miles farther I arrived at another log tavern and put up my pony for the night. I slept with a young Englishman. After we were shown the room we were to occupy, we wondered how we could lay *extended*, but after getting into bed we found a place to crowd our feet down alongside of the logs, and we found work enough till morning *fighting bed bugs*.

*Sunday Aug 11* ☞ After breakfast this morning I started on my journey. The way was through oak openings which were very pleasant indeed,\* and the land very good. Arrived at a tavern in eight miles—a real log tavern. The signpost was an oak tree, and the signs (for there was more than one) were about as wide as a shingle and nailed one above the

Arbor—A History of Its Early Settlement," *Michigan Pioneer Collections* (Lansing, 1877), Vol. I, 333. Sessions, in a rosy glow of reminiscence, wrote that "most of the early settlers came with their families from the old and cultivated portions of the east and south, and Ann Arbor society comprised several refined, educated, and enterprising gentlemen, and beautiful and accomplished ladies." *Ibid.*, 338. Perhaps he was right: Charles Fenno Hoffman called it "a pretty village" containing 700 or 800 inhabitants, many of whom were "very respectable English emigrants." *Winter in the West*, I, 156-57.

\*Oak openings were a characteristic feature of the Michigan terrain. "The *Openings* are sometimes distinguished into *openings* and *timbered openings*, owing to the different density of their timber. The major part of the unsurveyed portion of this peninsula is open land, or openings. These generally consist of table lands, lying between the rivers, and often bordering the streams themselves. They are sometimes deficient in timber, though frequently skirted with 'plains' and woodlands. They are usually but very sparsely interspersed with oak trees, of different varieties, often of a good size, but of a diminutive height. There is no underbrush. . . . A thick grass sward covers the soil, and, although it requires no labor to prepare the way for the plough, it requires the strength of three or four yoke of oxen to break it up for the first time. . . ." Blois, *Gazetteer of Michigan*, 24.

other to the tree. On the first was written, not very intelligibly, with tar, "Beer;" on the second, "Entertainment;" third, "Oats;" and such a dirty looking set in the house I never saw before. The very interesting family had surrounded the table and were greedily devouring their breakfast. There were four girls and two boys, sunburnt, smutty, dirty looking children, and the father and mother were ditto.

The only room in the house was the barroom, kitchen, dining room, and hogpen, and there was but one bed for the whole family, and that was tumbled about the room and the sheets looked like the grey mixed cloth—*so very dirty*—and they all looked like a grey mixture. While I was there, some other travellers came up, intending to have some breakfast. I was thankful that I had mine. To have another and more direct view of this filthy establishment, I took a position on the rail fence in front, and there looked until I was satisfied.

I tried to get some water for my horse but the springs and well were dry; therefore I "pushed along and kept moving." Stopped at the next log house, which was about eight miles, and got some dinner and some oats for my horse, and then proceeded eight miles further to Jacksonapolis and remained till next day. Passed through very good land covered with scattering oaks and high grass and flowers, till within a mile of this place, when I came to very heavy timber. Passed an Indian who was laying at the side of the path. He *yelled* at me, which gave me a little start at first, but I soon *steadied* my nerves. I should have gone farther but it was twenty miles to a *tavern* and I did not care about travelling in the night. Walked out into the groves and gathered some flowers, and took a view of the village. It is the county seat of Jackson County, not pleasantly situated at all, and it is very sickly at this time. Most all sick with "fevers" or with "fever and ague." There are two taverns and three stores and three or four dwellings, and it is a place of some business.\* However, I could not judge in regard to that, it being Sunday. I saw a good many Indians who were waiting to trade, most of them squaws.

\*Jacksonopolis soon became Jacksonburg, and finally, Jackson.

*Monday Aug 12th* ☞ I left Jacksonapolis this morning. Previous to my leaving I carried a letter to the office, and the first object that met my eyes after opening the door was the dead body of a child laid out upon the table, and no one in the room. I rapped and the postmaster came in & took the letter. I was very much shocked when I opened the door and I could not get over it for a great while.

After leaving, the way is through the most beautiful groves of oaks, and the ground is covered with grass and flowers and perfectly free from underbrush. The path is called the Washtenaw trail, and strikes the head of the St. Joseph River and follows its course to the lake. The land is a little rolling and in some places there are many acres without a tree, and it looks like land that has been cleared and cultivated for years. I passed some extensive marshes, surrounded by oak openings, which reminded me of the beautiful landscapes I have seen. The view was delightful beyond description.

I arrived at a log house twenty three miles from Jacksonapolis. It was the most comfortable log house I have seen or ever saw. It is well furnished and the family appeared quite happy and independent. The land about this place is very handsome and it seemed quite pleasant. The owner, Mr. Barna, is building a mill on the stream which passes in sight of the house. I could not get anything but marsh hay for my horse, which I thought, and no doubt the pony thought, rather a hard case. I took a dish of bread and milk, and after resting I started along.

Passed through heavy timbered land for about four miles and then came into oak groves, and travelled about four miles. Then into timber land again. The timber was large maples, white wood, ash, and basswood and hickory. While riding slowly along through the woods, I was a little surprised to find myself almost in an Indian wigwam. My pony snorted, and it was with difficulty that I could get him past. I enquired of a little squaw the distance to the next house but she could not understand me, and at the same time some of the old Indians started up who had been sleeping, and I said it is no matter and rode along. I did not care about

being too familiar with such strangers so far from inhabitants and alone.

This camp was near the head of the St. Joseph River. I rode but a few miles further and came to a log hut. It rained a little and I went in to take a peep at the inhabitants inside. There was one young man sick with the *fever and ague*, and his dear wife was homesick. No chimney, split logs for a floor, the fireplace was on the ground and the back of it was the logs which composed the walls of the house. Most of the log houses have chimneys made of split sticks laid up cobhouse fashion and plastered with mud inside and out.

After it stopped raining I started for McCamilies, which was about ten miles, and most of the way was through timber land.\* Night came on sooner than I expected and it was so dark that I could not see the path before I got out of the timber land, and when I came out on to a large plain I could not see any better. I let my pony take his own course and very soon I heard the barking of dogs, which led me to the house. I found a very comfortable place. Had a good supper, and by going up the *ladder* I found a good bed, and my pony had as many oats as he could eat. The old man told wolf, snake, and raccoon stories, which interested me very much, and I enjoyed myself well. The old woman was discontented and I heard her grumbling at her husband after I went to bed, but he did not seem to care much. I was told that there was a great many wild turkeys about this place, and deer, and rattlesnakes, and the blue racers, a kind of snake.

*Tuesday Aug 13* ☞ I left McCamilies after breakfast and travelled over some very fine land, part timber and part oak openings. Some was the burr oak openings, which is considered the best land. It was about ten miles to the nearest neighbor and about three to the next house, and again ten miles to the next. My [road] has been so far down the St. Joseph. Here I crossed the St. Joseph and travelled a short distance on the Nota-

\*McCamelus, a now-forgotten settlement just south of the old Chicago road in the center of what is now Jackson County.



waseepi Creek and came on to the Notawaseepi Prairie.\* It is the first prairie that I ever saw and it is a grand sight. It is about six miles long and three broad. Part of it yet belongs to the Indians, and part of it has been bought and sold by government and is under cultivation. The corn is very stout and high, and the grain has come in well. The part owned by the Indians is level and covered with a wild grass and it looks grand, and withal it is very rich.

I was troubled to get anything for my horse, but I was well supplied with bread and milk and blackberries. The husband was in the field but the wife was at home, and a very sociable and pleasant woman she was. She did not like the inhabitants and seemed some discontented. She was young and sociable and I thought she had seen very good company. We flattered each other when I left upon the pleasure of each other's company, and we were so agreeable that I was very willing to pay double price for my entertainment, and she was *quite unwilling to receive anything*. However, I left the money and went along, *rather sorry to go*. I lost my way soon after I started on the prairie, but very fortunately came across an Indian setting on a log, and he looked as if his friends had all deserted him. I asked him the way to White Pigeon and pointed at the different trails. He understood and pointed out the right one. I proceeded but a little way before I came to another trail that forked off, and I was quite as fortunate again. I saw another Indian, on the most savage looking horse that I ever saw. I went to him and asked him the way and he did not understand me. Says I, "Pigeon." He exclaimed "Och!" and pointed. I took the direction and he soon followed me, and I felt quite grand to lead an Indian, but very soon he rode past me and made a motion for me to follow him, which I did. He rode across the prairie and saved considerable distance in the travel.

I had a good opportunity to view this savage. He had a shawl made

\*Nattawasepee Prairie: "a rich prairie in the northern part of the township of Notawata, in St. Joseph county, and partly embraced in the Nottawasepee reservation." Blois, *Gazetteer of Michigan*, 333-34.

into a kind of turban, with one corner hanging down very low behind. His hair was long and black, and braids of it under each ear. He had a blanket on, red garters, moccasins, and spurs. He was a noble looking Indian and rode with a great deal of ease and majesty. His head was up, and he neither turned it to the right or the left. His horse was a full blooded Indian, a monstrous mane, which the Indian seemed to be very proud of. He lifted it up and showed me the length of it, and looked as much as to say, "Did you ever see the like before?"

From Notawaseepi Prairie to Centerville is six miles. This is the county seat of St. Joseph County, and it is situated in a most delightful place, surrounded by a beautiful grove of oaks, and the wild grass and the pretty flowers cover the ground. There are but few houses yet, some framed.\* I made but a short stop and proceeded on to White Pigeon twelve miles distant, and it is through a delightful grove all the way. Land almost a perfect level and it is very good, indeed. I was obliged to go a little out of my way on account of finding a fording place in a creek two miles from Pigeon. When I came in sight of Pigeon Prairie I was astonished. It was the [most] splendid view that I ever beheld. The village was situated on the upper side of the prairie, and it looked beautiful.

The prairie contains seventy five thousand acres and is immensely rich, and a great part of it is now under cultivation. The corn did not look so well as the corn on the Notawaseepi Prairie, but it is considered quite as rich land. I passed through the centre of [the] prairie as I went into the village, and I had a fine view of the whole. It is considerable of a village and very pleasant. They are building a meeting house and some dwellings, and there are a number of stores and some mechanic shops. The land office is also kept here and there are two taverns, [at] the best looking of which I took up my quarters for the night.†

\*Centerville was platted in 1831. "A piece of land about one-half a township in area was reserved in 1821 to the Potawatomi Indians, which was not open to settlement until two years after the Indian treaty of 1833; but south of the reservation a line of settlements began to form as early as 1828-29; one of these was Centerville." Fuller, *Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan*, 273.

†Hoffman, following our traveler in late December, 1833, had this to say: "The

By the way, I was very much amused at the tea table, to see the straining at style. Instead of a waiting maid to turn the tea a little boy was sent in. I am confident I saw him taking care of the horses a short time before. He, nor they, did not know enough to be decent. He was dressed in a check shirt, without any coat, but he had a hat which he kept on his head all the time. After turning the tea he took a seat near to me at the side of the table and looked at me as if he had never seen anybody before. If I had not been hungry I should have kicked the little impudent rascal out of the room, *but* I kept my temper beyond all calculation.

*Wednesday Aug 14th* ☞ It has rained until after dinner, and in the meantime I have been writing some letters to my friends. I got my pony shod by an ignorant blacksmith. I have been so fortunate as to find a gentleman by the name of Churchill from the State of New York, who is travelling west and is as much desirous of company as I am. We left White Pigeon soon after dinner and travelled about eight miles to the St. Joseph River. The people are building a bridge, but we were obliged to ford it, and the water was so deep that we were obliged to lay down on our horses to keep from getting wet. From the river we rode about seven miles over very uneven and rather poor land, and put up at a mean log house. The family were most all sick. However, the fare was middling decent. We passed a good many marshes, which are no doubt the cause of the sickness in this part of the country.

*Thursday Aug 15* ☞ A very pleasant day. Left the log hotel after breakfast and continued our journey through rather ordinary land, third country now became gradually more populous as I approached the village and prairie of White Pigeon. I had ridden fourteen miles in the morning without seeing the sign of a habitation; and as one meets with neither travelers nor emigrants at this season, there is some company even in the smoke of a chimney, though you do not stop to warm your fingers by the fire beneath it. . . . At White Pigeon, where I found quite a pretty village of four years' growth, I seemed, in getting upon the post-route from Detroit to Chicago, to get back once more to an old country." *Winter in the West*, I, 218-19.



teen miles to Beardslee's Prairie, a very fine one and very rich and fertile. On the lower side of the prairie there is a beautiful little lake and on the banks of it there is a town laid out called Edwardsburgh. There are a number of buildings already built.\* This prairie is not so large as some of the others, but quite as pleasant. From this prairie to the St. Joseph River again is about seven miles, through miserable land. It has the appearance at first sight of being the finest of land, but it is nothing except sand. The oaks are small, but the grass grows very rank and is rather deceitful, carrying an idea of good land when it is not so.

We overtook four Indians on horses, and met a number of squaws with but one old Indian for a guard. We crossed the river four miles above the town of Niles at Bertrand Village, which consists of three or four huts. It was laid out by an old Frenchman who married a squaw and owns the land about it.† We could not ford the river, and after waiting a little time we were ferried over and were landed on the Indian reservation which consists of a piece of land ten miles square. About two miles from the river we passed through the Indian settlement containing about thirty wigwams. The Indians were lying about on the ground with perfect ease and indolence. I saw a number of squaws and some of them were rather pretty; but generally they are very plain, at *least* those whom I have seen. Near

\*Blois described Edwardsburg as a "pleasantly situated and very flourishing" village and postoffice "on the Chicago turnpike, at the northeast corner of Beardsley's prairie, and on Beardsley's lake." *Gazetteer of Michigan*, 283. Beardsley's prairie "has a dry, rich soil, and produces large crops of grain." *Ibid.*, 252.

†"In some respects the most pretentious village project of the section [the St. Joseph valley] in this period was that at Bertrand, below Niles. . . . This was a speculative venture on a large scale, initiated in 1833 by a joint stock association of persons from New York and Indiana, together with the French trader Joseph Bertrand. The author and chief promoter of the project was a surveyor on the Chicago Road, and it was probably his work which was just nearing completion in Berrien County that attracted his attention to its possibilities. This village of twelve hundred lots covered a plot nearly a mile square on Portage Prairie, at a point where it is crossed by the St. Joseph river. The site was well chosen and the time was propitious, but the fatal and common mistake was made of holding the lots at too high a figure, which caused settlers to favor Niles." Fuller, *Economic and Social Beginnings of Michigan*, 277.



this settlement is a beautiful prairie belonging to the Indians. They have about eighty acres of corn enclosed in one piece which looks fine. The rest of the prairie is in common and is covered with stout grass and flowers. Saw a great many horses feeding on the prairie. There were a great many tents about the cornfield, where the squaws were picking, boiling, and drying the corn. I said *Chicago* to one of them and she pointed the direction.

We passed across this reservation and viewed it with admiration. It contains some of the best and most beautiful land in this part of the country.\* After leaving the prairie the land was not quite as rich but it was through a beautiful grove of oaks and hickory and over gently rolling land which made it very delightful and pleasant.

Found a very singular flower, which was very handsome. Gathered some of the bark from the sassafras root. Saw some very large sassafras trees. Heard a rattlesnake and tried to find him, but could not.

Arrived on to Terracoupa prairie† in Indiana at sunset and *put up* at a log tavern kept by a man by the name of Egbert. He had been in the town two years and he could not tell me the name of the town. He was an igno-

\*In the fall of 1822 the Rev. Isaac McCoy established a Baptist mission among the Potawatomi, locating it a mile west of the present city of Niles. The establishment resulted from a treaty made at Chicago on August 29, 1821, by which the United States had given the Potawatomi a square mile of land on the St. Joseph River at this site and had agreed to sustain a teacher and blacksmith there for fifteen years.

In the beginning, the mission prospered. By the spring of 1825 it had seventy Indian pupils, and twelve had been converted to Christianity. Two hundred acres had been fenced, and thirty Indian families were cultivating fields and raising cattle and hogs. But white settlers were moving into the region, and their sales of whiskey to the Indians soon had disastrous results. Fences went unrepaired, and fields grew up with weeds. In 1831 the mission was closed. G. S. Bailey, *The Carey Indian Mission at Niles, Michigan* (Detroit, n.d.).

By a treaty made at the Tippecanoe River, October 27, 1832, the Potawatomi ceded all their lands in Michigan south of Grand River except the reservation at Not-a-wa-sepe and one other: these they gave up at Chicago on September 27, 1833. Alpheus Felch, "The Indians of Michigan and the Cession of Their Lands to the United States by Treaties," *Michigan Pioneer & Historical Collections*, V. 26, 286.

†Terre Coupe prairie.

rant and bigoted scoundrel and I despised him.\* He said, in speaking of the lands belonging to the Indians and the course taken by the whites to obtain them, that it was no matter how much the whites tricked them in their purchases if they could only get their lands and drive them away. Such principles ought to receive a just reward. Government are not entirely free from the imputation of dishonor. They have employed unprincipled agents, who have abused, deceived, and cheated them out of their property, and if the guilty deceivers could be found, it would [take] the Indians a great while to deal out justice with a free use of the tomahawk and scalping knife.

*Friday Aug 16* ☞ A very pleasant and warm day. Left the very honorable landlord on the Teracoupa Prairie. After breakfast followed our course along the border of this prairie for some distance. It is, by the way, a very extensive prairie and very rich indeed, but it is not considered so valuable on account of its being very low and some wet and marshy. It is surrounded by a heavy growth of timber and along the path we were travelling were an immense quantity of plums and crab apples, but they were not ripe.

About five miles passed a beautiful little lake, called Distman Lake.† A little village is laid out on the bank of it, but as yet the lots are not much improved. Two log dwellings are occupied by Indians, and there is one store. From this lake it is about one mile through a piece of heavy timberland where we came onto the great rolling prairie. It is a fine prairie but not so rich as some. It is more rolling than any I have seen and we seemed to be a great while crossing it on account of the many hollows.

We travelled about six miles on this prairie and then passed through a little grove onto the celebrated *door prairie*, the finest and richest and

\*The first circuit court was held in this region in November, 1832. One of the six attorneys admitted to practice was Elisha Egbert! *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Indiana* (Chicago, 1876), 260.

†Probably Du Chemin Lake in Hudson Township, La Porte County. The embryonic town was probably Hudson.

largest prairie in this part of Indiana. It is surrounded by beautiful timberland and it extends onto the prairie in many places, leaving a little passageway onto another part of the prairie, and many of the parts resemble large fields which have been cultivated in times past. Not a tree or a shrub on them, all ready for the plough.\*

We arrived at Laporte, the county seat of Laporte County. It is laid out into lots and very delightfully situated on the bank of a beautiful little lake. It contains three stores, one log tavern where we dined, and a few dwellings. They have a steam sawmill where they get their lumber for building, and it cuts out the timber fast.†

From Laporte we went to the mouth of Trail Creek (twelve miles) on Lake Michigan. Passed across small prairies and through some heavy timberland and down some very steep hills and across oak openings and sandy land, and I saw a grove of small pine trees for the first time since I crossed Lake Erie.

We put up for the night at the mouth of Trail Creek, a miserable place called Michigan City. It is surveyed into lots and it is intended to be the commercial city of Indiana, it being the only place where a harbour can be made on this end of the lake, and the only sloop communication that can be had in the state. The state have laid out a road from LaFayette on the Wabash River to this place, and the road from Detroit to Chicago is expected to pass through the place. The creek is very narrow, not wide

\*The season made a difference. Hoffman, describing the identical route a few months later, wrote: "Our next stage carried us over a *rolling prairie* to Laporte. The undulating surface resembled the ground-swell of the sea; and nothing could be more dreary, at this season, when the bright sky of the morning became overcast, than moving mile after mile over this frozen lake—for such it appeared—with nothing but its monotonous swell to catch the eye wherever its glances roamed." *Winter in the West*, I, 225-26.

†"La Porte . . . is situated on the southeastern shore of Harris's lake, in the Door prairie, twelve miles from the mouth of Trail creek. It is surrounded by an extensive body of rich land, beautifully diversified with prairies, lake and groves. This town has been but recently established, and contains at this time about fifty or sixty inhabitants." *The Indiana Gazetteer, or Topographical Dictionary* (Second Edition, Indianapolis, 1833), 103.



enough for a schooner to turn around, and the sand bars extend into the lake a great distance, which would make it very expensive making a harbour. Notwithstanding the expense and inconvenience the state or inhabitants intend to apply to Government for an appropriation of money to build a good harbour.

The city *now* is not very extensive, consisting of only three poor log houses and one storehouse lately built. It is surrounded by high sand hills and the country for five or six miles around is sandy and barren. The outlet of the creek is between two very high sand hills, the highest which I saw on the lake.\*

We stayed at a most miserable house. The lady was very polite—a little too much so to be pleasing. Five or six children. No hay for our horses. Husband gone to a razing and but one room in the house, but we were obliged to put up with it and grin and bear it, for it was fifty miles to the next house. We called for supper and it was such a collection that a well bred hog in New England would not nor could not stomach it. I tasted of the meat and I should suppose it had been on hand some weeks, and the butter made me feel very strangely about the stomach, and bread got me deep into the hobbles. As I saw it on the table I said to the woman, "I am glad to see some rye and Indian bread once more." Says she, "It is wheat bread." There was no way left for me to creep out. I was deceived, but it was so brown and black that I did not care for the mistake. My friend joked me about the blunder.

At length the husband came home and got some oats for our horses, and after our *delicious* supper we walked about the city and down onto the shore of the lake, and we crawled up onto one of the high sand hills which overlooks this *great* city, and after we got weary of walking we returned to the *log hotel* and went to bed among the whole family. All the

\*In 1833, Michigan City was only a promise. "This town was laid out in the fall of 1832; several families have already settled here; improvements are rapidly progressing; and it is believed that the advantages of the situation, the salubrity of the climate, and the fertility of the adjacent lands, must insure its rapid improvement." *Indiana Gazetteer*, 119.



children, but one *screamer*, laid about the floor like so many pigs. The man, wife, and child had a bed, and we had another and so near the door that my feet were cooled by the evening breeze, and the logs were such distant neighbours that I could very sensibly feel the cooling air blowing upon me, and I could not sleep for an eternal roaring of the waters of the lake and the roaring of the children. And to cap the climax of my afflictions, in came four drunken fellows tumbling and swearing about the room. They were determined to stay and sleep on the floor, and after remaining about two hours, the brave landlord told them that there were travellers in the bed who wanted to get some rest and they must make less noise, upon which they became sensitive, got mad, and much to our satisfaction left the house.

*Friday Aug 17* ☞ This morning after having passed a sleepless night and taken some cold, and after having partaken of a breakfast of some chickens very cooked, we bid adieu to the *comfortable* and *beautiful Michigan City*, and pursued our course along the sandy beach of Lake Michigan. Fortunately for us the wind did not blow hard from the north, which gave us an opportunity to travel on the hard sand which was kept so by the continual washing of the waves. Some of the time our horses would be obliged to travel in the water, but it was better than to travel on the dry sand.

It has been a beautiful day—a cool, refreshing breeze from the lake has favored us, which we found quite comfortable; and it was well for us, for we could not find anything else to refresh ourselves or horses until we arrived to the mouth of the Calumet River,\* a distance of fifty miles. We found great quantities of sand cherries, but we never saw any before and did not dare to eat many. They resemble our black cherries, only a little larger, and grow on low bushes on the dry sand, and are very sweet indeed.

About noon we saw an Indian but he run and hid from us, and after travelling about half way across the beach we passed an Indian camp. We

\*The Calumet River.

stopped and borrowed a dipper to dip up some water. I proposed stopping to dine with them as they had just got their dinner ready, but my companion said I could if I would eat out of the same dish, a dish filled with corn and fish without even being scaled, all thrown in whole and jumbled up together into a real chowder. I finally concluded not to dine and we proceeded. We seemed to be travelling all the time in the same spot; we seemed to be following a point of land but did not seem to gain any. It was like going round a bay, there was all the time a point extending out. And finally it was no more nor less than a bay consisting of the south end of Lake Michigan.

The lake was gently rolling and it looked powerful and magnificent. Its waters were clear and pure and cool and good to drink. The shore of the lake is sandy all the way round the south end of it, and in some places the sand hills and sandy plains extend back into the country for miles; and in some places there are extensive marshes bordering on the lake, seemed to be parted only by a little winnow of sand. It is more marshy near the mouth of the Calumic River, and we travelled along the shore of some small lakes, only had to cross a little sand bar. The whole country on the south shore of Lake Michigan is cold, marshy land or barren, sandy land for some miles from the lake. We found some coal on the shore, which was an evidence that there is a bed of it somewhere in the vicinity.

We arrived at Mann's log house at the mouth of the Calumic about five o'clock P. M., very hungry and very much fatigued after having rode fifty miles without any [thing] to eat; and our horses, too, were weary and hungry, but we could not get anything but marsh hay. Yet we were determined to remain till next day. Mr. Mann, the proprietor of this *splendid establishment*, married a squaw and we had a squaw supper.\* Quite a decent cup

\*John Mann kept a tavern and a ferry at the mouth of the Calumet. Rufus Blanchard, *Discovery and Conquests of the Northwest* (Chicago, 1898), I, 569. Mann appears to have been something of a roisterer. A. T. Andreas included in his *History of Cook County, Illinois* (Chicago, 1884) a long account of a Fourth of July celebration at Calumet City in 1836 that reached a high point of bibulous hilarity. Mann supplied the liquor. P. 569. In another connection—the building of the first bridge across the Calumet—Andreas also referred to Mann's over-fondness for whiskey. P. 570.

of coffee, tho'. After supper I borrowed a gun and went up the river after game. I saw a great many ducks but they were flying at a distance. I saw some in the river but the marsh about the river was so wide and the grass so high that I could not get a shot at them.

In the evening Mr. Mann returned from Chicago with some oats and we succeeded in getting a few for our horses—but a few, however, for there were some more travellers arrived in the evening and we were obliged to divide. Some of the travellers had been to Chicago and some had been down into the state of Illinois. After each one told his most marvelous stories we retired to a log hut recently erected for a lodging room. There were three things called beds, which were occupied by six of us, and two were obliged to sleep on the floor.

*Sunday Aug 18* ☞ Left Calumet River for Chicago which is about fourteen miles distant. By the way, I would speak of the Calumet River. It is a fine deep river and navigable fifteen miles from its mouth. With a little expense a fine harbour could be made, even better than one could be made at Chicago.\* The river is wider and deeper than the Chicago River and can be navigated much farther into the country. The land is cold and marshy about the outlet of the river. There is a very good place to build a town on the lake and there will be one laid out before a great while, and it must be something of a place in time. Mr. Mann claims the best part of the land by a preëmption right. There is some doubt about his claim, and if he does not substantiate it, it will be sold when government bring their lands into market, which will probably be in a year or two.

We arrived at Chicago about noon and took up our quarters at Mr. Kinzie's new tavern, kept by Mr. Clark.† After dining I walked down the street and was surprised to see the stores shut and no business doing.

\*The twentieth century has borne out this prediction. Since 1905, Calumet Harbor has handled more tonnage than the Chicago River and Harbor.

†The Green Tree Tavern, on the northeast corner of Canal and Lake streets. It was built by James Kinzie in 1833, and opened for business by David Clock. A. T. Andreas, *History of Chicago* (Chicago, 1884), I, 633.



However, I had not been a great while wondering before my friend, who by the way is a member of the Baptist Church, came to me and informed me that it was Sunday. I did not dream of it before. I was very much obliged to him as it probably saved me from exposing myself. We travelled 'till noon without knowing or thinking of the day of the week, and very likely we should not have found out that it was the Sabbath had we not stopped at Chicago. I thought it rather more of a joke on my friend than on myself, *he* being a *professor*. But I thought none the worse of him for I liked him very much and think him a very sensible and a very good man. This afternoon I went down to the lake, which is about a mile from the tavern, and bathed in Lake Michigan, and I have felt very much better since, quite like a new man.

For some time before we arrived at Chicago we could only see the lighthouse, but as we approached nearer we could see the Fort\* and one or two other buildings, and we could not see anything more until we left the beach of the lake and rose onto the prairie. There we had a grand view of an extensive prairie, and a very fine view of the town. The prairie was alive with cattle and horses and it looked very pleasant, and the principal street, which we passed through, looked lively and businesslike, altho' we afterwards found out that it was the Sabbath. There did not seem to be much attention paid to the Sabbath. I believe, however, that there was a meeting in a log dwelling or school house. I saw men about the streets as the New England people would be on a week day, and I saw some Indians drunk. They had been fighting and were covered with blood.

I am much disappointed in the appearance of Chicago and the land about. Instead of a swampy, marshy, sunken place, as I had expected to see from the representations I had received from those that had seen the place, I found what I thought a very pleasant place.† I shall remain here tomorrow and perhaps longer.

\*The second Fort Dearborn, erected in 1816 and located, like the first fort, on the south side of the Chicago River at what is now the junction of Wacker Drive and Michigan Avenue.

†Chicago was incorporated as a town in the summer of 1833. The first election (for



*Monday Aug 19* ☞ Today has been very pleasant and I am still in Chicago. Previous to my arriving here I had heard that the Indian Agent at this place was going to send out runners to inform the Indians belonging to the Pottawattami tribe that their annual pension or payment would be paid to them the tenth day of September. I immediately made up my mind to go with one of the runners, provided I should not be obliged to wait too long. This morning, or rather about noon, I called upon the Agent and he was absent. I called after dinner again and found him.\* I told him what my wishes were. He said I should find it rather a hard journey, but if I wished to go, and was determined to go, he would recommend a young man by the name of Louis Wilmot,† a half Indian, he being the

town trustees) was held on August 10, just eight days before Benton's arrival. "No record of any enumeration of the inhabitants is extant, and all statements as to the actual population at that time are estimates, based on the whims, impressions, or rumors of the time. It required a population of 150 to form a corporate town organization, and it is not probable that Chicago had more than the required number. Based on the number of voters (twenty-eight) at the first election, and allowing a population of five to each voter, the resident population was 140 in August, 1833." Andreas, *History of Chicago*, I, 128.

\*The Indian agent was Thomas J. V. Owen. Owen had been elected one of the five town trustees on August 10. Two days later, at the first meeting of the board, he was chosen president. He is sometimes referred to, in disregard of exact terminology, as Chicago's first mayor.

†Louis Ouilmette, a son of Antoine Ouilmette, for whom the suburban city of Wilmette is named. Antoine Ouilmette was a French trader who was living on the site of Chicago when the first Fort Dearborn was erected in 1803. After John Kinzie arrived in 1804, Ouilmette entered Kinzie's service. "Ouilmette's house was just north, and within a very short distance of Mr. Kinzie's. At the time of the Fort Dearborn massacre, it became the hiding place of Mrs. Helm, where she was preserved from the furious savages who sought her life by the courage and coolness of Mrs. Bisson, a sister of Mrs. Ouilmette. It was in Ouilmette's garden that William Griffith, the Quartermaster at the fort, hid himself behind the currant bushes, and when discovered by the family was disguised as a Canadian voyageur and helped to escape with the Kinzies.

"After the departure of the boat containing his employer's family, Ouilmette was left the sole white inhabitant of Chicago. . . . At the treaty made at Prairie du Chien in 1829 with the tribe of which his wife was a member, Ouilmette was granted, on her account, a reservation at Gros Point, now Wilmette. There he made a farm and

most companionable of the three whom he had employed, and he said that he might take which route I should prefer. I did not then determine, for I had almost given up the journey, it being two days before we could start. I thanked the Agent, who is a very pleasant and agreeable man, for his politeness, and we left his house. While returning I gave up the intended journey entirely, and concluded to continue in company with my friend, and just as I was passing the postoffice door, who should meet me face to face but J. K. Palmer. I was very glad to see him and I immediately determined to stay a little longer. I regretted that I could not travel with my friend but I told him I must remain a little while, and I bid him goodbye.

I thought myself very fortunate in finding my friend Palmer, and we were both very much surprised to see each other, and I am confident we were very happy to meet so unexpectedly. Palmer has been at Chicago about four months and has become acquainted with many, or with all, the inhabitants, and he introduced me to many of them, which makes me feel very much at home.\*

I have concluded to wait till Wednesday and take my Indian tramp and have informed the Agent that I should prefer visiting the Indians in the state of Illinois, to which he answered that the young man would be ready on Wednesday. He laughed at me, saying that I should find harder times than I expected, and his pretty wife laughed, no doubt thinking it was a wild goose chase. But I had a great curiosity to see the Indians at home and far away from the whites, and I was unwilling to let so good an opportunity pass without improving it.† And I longed to tread on ground that remained until the Pottawatomies were removed to the West. He accompanied them with his family, and both himself and wife died at Council Bluffs, Iowa." Seven children, Louis included, settled on the banks of the Kansas River with the Potawatomi. Andreas, *History of Chicago*, I, 92.

\*During the cholera epidemic of 1834 J. K. Palmer represented the South District on a committee charged with enforcing a regulation against throwing refuse into the town sewers. In the fall of 1835 he joined the Pioneer Hook and Ladder Company, Chicago's first company of volunteer fire fighters. Andreas, *History of Chicago*, I, 222, 594. We have been able to find no other record. Presumably, he either died or moved elsewhere.

†The Indian situation in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin at the time of Benton's visit is best summarized by Andreas:

had never been inhabited by civilized mortals. I wanted to be travelling in the wilderness of the west among the savages where I could be an eye witness to their mode of living. And then again, there is something wild, novel, and romantic about it.

*Tuesday Aug 20* ☞ Another pleasant day, and I have improved it very much to my satisfaction. I have had a good opportunity to view the town and country about, and I find Chicago a very pleasant place, as I have before thought. It is situated on the southwestern shore of Lake

“The close of the Black Hawk War had resulted in the final extinguishment of the title of the Sac and Fox Indians to all their lands east of the Mississippi. September 15, 1832, a treaty was concluded at Fort Armstrong, whereby the Winnebago nation ceded all their lands to the United States ‘lying south and east of the Wisconsin River and the Fox River of Green Bay.’ The Chippewas, Ottawas, and Pottawatomies still held their title to the land of northeastern Illinois and southern Wisconsin, besides large tracts not very definitely defined in Indiana and Michigan. It was necessary, in order to open up to civilization the lands ceded by the other tribes lying west and northwest, that the Indian title to this vast tract of land lying along the western shore of Lake Michigan should be extinguished. For Chicago, it was a vital necessity, as the town was girt on all sides and for many miles north and west by the lands of the United Nation of Chippewa, Ottawa, and Pottawatomie Indians.

“In September, 1833, a grand council of the chiefs and head men was called to meet at Chicago to negotiate a treaty whereby lands might be peaceably ceded, and the Indians removed therefrom. . . . The commissioners on the part of the Government were: G. B. Porter, Thomas J. V. Owen, and William Weatherford; on the part of the Indians all the chiefs and the leading men of the United Nation that could be gathered—a most motley crowd, of whom only one out of seventy-seven signed his name to the treaty without ‘his X mark,’ and probably not over half a dozen understood the provisions of the treaty, except as explained to them imperfectly by interpreters, few of whom were themselves passable English scholars.” *History of Chicago*, I, 122-24.

The treaty was signed on September 26, 1833, and ratified by the Senate on May 22, 1834. By its terms the Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi ceded all their lands east of the Mississippi to the United States. In return, they received a grant of 5,000,000 acres—approximately the extent of their cession—on the east bank of the Missouri River, to which the Indians living in Illinois were to remove immediately after the ratification of the treaty. Those living in the Territory of Wisconsin were given three years in which to move to their new home. In addition, the tribes were promised payments in money and goods totalling \$850,000. *Ibid.*, I, 124-25.



Michigan at the mouth of the Chicago River, and already it has the appearance of considerable business. It is laid out into lots on each side of the river, and between the two branches, which come together about one mile from the lake. On the north side of the river the lots commence on the shore of the lake and extend up to the branch (north), but on the south side the United States Fort and the other buildings connected with it are on the shore of the lake, and the land belonging to the Government extends about one hundred rods up the river. And then the lots commence and run some distance up the south branch.

The first street on the south side of the river is eighty feet wide, bordering on the river, and nearly every lot on this street is occupied already and it is the place of nearly all the business.\* The lots are one hundred and fifty feet deep and eighty feet front. Another street back of this and another, etc., each and all eighty feet wide. The court house is to be located on this side fronting a little square. On the north side there are lots laid out on the river which will be some more convenient, but will not be so pleasant nor so valuable on account of its not being so natural a place for business. The town is laid out very regular, at least as regular as possible with the situation of the place.

The lots are mostly owned by the United States government and the state of Illinois. Part of the lands, every other section, was given by the United States to the state of Illinois for the purpose of making a canal from the mouth of the Chicago River to the mouth of the Fox River where it enters into the Illinois. The state made sale of a few lots some time since, and the rest remain as they were and cannot be sold until the legislature meet again, which will not take place until sometime in eighteen hundred and thirty four. The lots being owned as they are is of great disadvantage to the place and to the appearance of it.† It prevents the erection of good

\*South Water Street, now Wacker Drive.

†In 1827 the federal government granted to the State of Illinois alternate sections of land in a belt extending five miles on each side of the proposed Illinois and Michigan Canal. It was expected that with the proceeds from the sale of this land the state would finance the construction of the canal. Part of the land lay in Chica-



buildings, for no one would be willing to risk a large amount of property on public land which must be brought into market and sold under the hammer.

At present the town presents a singular and very peculiar appearance. The lots, many of them, are improved with temporary buildings, some not more than ten foot square, and they are scattered about like the cattle on the prairie. They are mostly new. I believe there has been one hundred built this year, all without any regard to beauty, and they are set on blocks so that they can move them at the shortest notice. It will depend some on the length of the purse of the occupant whether the building shall be moved at the time the lots come into market.

The north side of the river is partly owned by individuals, but it is not much settled yet; some few buildings near the lake. The settlements are in the forks of the river (which consists of one new tavern house two stories high, one other old-looking tavern, one large store building, and a number of log dwellings), and on the south side is the most, which consists of two large, two-story taverns, three or four large storehouses, and a great number of small dwellings and shops. This street extends to the land occupied for the Fort, and is the principal place of business.\*

The Fort and public buildings are situated on the shore of the river go. In 1830 the canal commissioners sold certain lots to defray the cost of the first survey of the town. The next land sale did not take place until October, 1833, when the so-called school section, bounded today by State, Madison, Halsted streets and Roosevelt Road, was sold at auction. The federal government did not put land in the public domain on sale until June 15, 1835. Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago* (New York, 1937), II, 46, 56-57, 58.

\*Compare with the description of John Bates, who settled in Chicago in 1832. "In 1833 the settlement of the new town, so far as buildings showed, was mostly on what is now Water Street. There was nothing on Lake Street, except perhaps the Catholic church begun on the northwest corner of Lake and State. Up and down Water Street, between what is now State and Wells streets . . . , all the business houses and stores were built. Also nearly all the cabins for dwellings. You could, from every store and dwelling, look north across the river, as there were no buildings on what is now the north side of that street. . . . There was no bridge across the main river, and never had been." In Andreas, *History of Chicago*, I, 131-32.

and lake, and it is much the most pleasant part of the town, rendered more pleasant on account of its being elevated a little higher than the rest of the land about. Fort Dearborn, as it is called, is an old fort and it has that appearance, except that the buildings have lately been whitewashed, which makes it appear a little more respectable. It is surrounded by a post fence which would not be much protection against a few pieces of heavy cannon. It answers, and has answered very well, however, as a good and safe refuge from the revenge and cruelty of the savages. It is occupied at present by two companies of forty-eight men each, but in all probability they will soon be unnecessary residents. If emigration continues at the same rate it has done the past season, the country will very soon be able to defend themselves; when that time comes the soldiers will be removed to some other station and the land will be sold and laid out and made to constitute a part of the town.

The Government have appropriated thirty thousand dollars for the purpose of making a safe and convenient harbour. The work is going on briskly & will probably be finished the next season. At present the vessels are obliged to anchor outside of the bar and unload by means of small boats or lighters, so called, and these have to be rowed more than a mile around the bar. When the river comes onto the beach of the lake it turns almost directly south and follows the beach, making a channel of about fifty yards between the beach and the sand bar, and it cannot be crossed even by small boats until proceeding about half a mile from the turn and then with difficulty sometimes. When the harbour is finished all this expense, time, and trouble will be saved. The work has been commenced on the south side of the river at the turn, and they are extending a wharf directly into the lake, cutting through the sand bar, and when finished the river will have a straight and direct channel into the lake, so that any vessel can come into the river and unload anywhere in town, saving all the distance round the bar with their freight's expense & the danger of anchoring in the lake. It will be a safe harbour and the only one in this part of the lake, and the only one that *can* be except the mouth of the Calemic

River. Vessels will be able to run up the south branch a mile or two, and up the north branch some farther.\*

The trade of Chicago seems to be with the inhabitants in the vicinity of the Wabash River, at least a considerable share of it. They come with large covered waggons drawn by three or four yoke of oxen, generally loaded with wheat which they exchange for salt. They travel very cheap indeed. Their way is across an extensive prairie nearly the whole distance, which is about one hundred and twenty miles to the Wabash River. They carry their victuals with them, and when night comes they turn their oxen onto the prairie and sleep in their waggons. At Chicago they do the same, and I saw them cooking by their fires, making coffee, kneading bread, and baking it on the coals. A large space is occupied by their teams and there is a number present all the time. They seem to live as comfortable as many of the inhabitants.† There are a number of settlements in the vicinity of Chicago which do part of their trading here, but not all.

The country about Chicago, for the distance of twelve miles from the lake, is mostly a low prairie covered with grass and beautiful flowers. Southwest from the town there is not one tree to be seen; the horizon rests upon the prairie. North, on the lake, is sandy hills and barren. Between there and the north branch is a swampy, marshy place, and there is a marshy place on the south branch. The town stands on the highest part of the prairie, and in the wet part of the season the water is so deep that it is necessary to wade from the town for some miles to gain the dry prairie. Notwithstanding the water standing on the prairie and the low, marshy places, and the dead-looking river, it is considered a healthy place. It has almost a continual lake breeze, which will explain in a measure the

\*At the time this was written the Chicago River made a bend to the south just east of Fort Dearborn and emptied into Lake Michigan at about the present junction of Madison Street and Michigan Avenue. The bar which deflected the river to the south was cut through as early as 1834, but the city was to struggle for the next twenty-five years to maintain a channel deep enough and wide enough for shipping.

†Wabash Avenue takes its name from the road the Wabash traders traveled in bringing their produce to Chicago.



healthiness of the place. And another reason is the cleansing of the river water by the winds driving the pure lake water into and then running out again.

The inhabitants are a singular collection of beings. "All nations and kindred and people and tongues." Black and white and red and grey, and they live in all manner of ways. Some men do their own cooking. I saw one little hovel which contained a family, and near it was two stakes and a pole across it where they hung on the pot and done all their cooking, & all of it in the principal street.

I was surprised to observe the masculine appearance of the women. They were in the street as much as the men, and seemed to prefer a seat outside of their dwelling places rather than to sit down under their own roof. And finally I have seen a good deal to surprise, interest, and amuse me for the few days that I have remained here.

*Wednesday Aug 21* ⚔ Today has been very pleasant. I called upon the Agent and was introduced to my new companion, Louis Wilmot. He is half French and half Indian; rather short but very strong and active-looking. His complexion is that of an Indian, and his hair is long, straight, and black. He wears a hat, blue calico shirt, moccasins, and pantaloons, and he also wears a red belt round his waist in which is fastened his tomahawk and scalping knife. He has lived with the Indians more or less for six years and understands their tongue very well, and can speak English and French.\* I asked him what it would be necessary for us to take for provisions and some bread and dried beef. But we could not obtain anything except some maple sugar, some crackers, and sea bread. And after draining a couple of bottles of beer, we left Chicago in company with an old Indian, for Gross Point about twenty miles north on Lake Michigan,

\*According to one authority Louis Ouilmette, then a mere boy, brought the garri-son at Fort Dearborn first word that Mackinac had fallen to the British. Ouilmette had the news from other Indians, and passed it on to Captain Heald several days before the arrival of General Hull's messenger with the official report. Frank R. Grover, *Antoine Ouilmette* (Evanston, 1908), p. 10.



where we arrived about ten o'clock in the evening.\* Stayed with the old Indian whom I liked very much. He could talk some English and seemed quite a philosopher. While passing along the sandy shore of the lake the dogs ran after a deer. It was dark, and he expressed his astonishment at the wonderful power of the dog—his seeing, running, and scenting the track. Says he: "If a man should attempt to run in de dark wood, first he know, he have a stick right in his eye," and says he, "There be a great many strange things in dis world, and I spose all for de best," etc.

We turned our horses into a little field near the log mansion. Eat some crackers and went to bed in the same room with the old Indian and his squaw. Our bed was on the floor. When I was undressing says the old Indian: "I spose you would not think it very modest to take off your clothes and go to bed before the ladies." However, I did not feel very delicate in the presence of his old squaw.

*Thursday Aug 22* ☞ I did not rest very well last night on account of having so hard a bed, I presume. We bid the old Indian goodbye and went about one mile to the home of Louis,† where we took breakfast, and I did not see but what the breakfast was as good, and finally a good deal better than some breakfasts I have had among the whites in this country. Although it was cooked by a squaw, his, Louis's mother.

After furnishing ourselves with some ammunition and a gun, we started.

\*The two travelers undoubtedly followed the Green Bay Road. According to Milo M. Quaife, the trail "started at the north end of the Michigan Boulevard bridge and ran north along the height of land between the lake shore and the North Branch. The route led north on Rush Street as far as Chicago Avenue and from here northwesterly for a mile to the intersection of Clark Street and North Avenue. . . . Continuing northward, the trail kept inland from the lake some distance, coming in sight of it between Chicago and Milwaukee only at Grosse Point." *Chicago Highways Old and New* (Chicago, 1923), 106-07.

Grosse Point is the bulge into the lake at the dividing line between Evanston and Wilmette.

†The cabin of Antoine Ouilmette, for whom the village of Wilmette was named, stood a short distance east of the clubhouse of the Wilmette Country Club, and a short distance north of Lake Avenue.

Took a northwest direction from the lake and travelled about ten miles through rich land and very heavily timbered, about two miles through marshy land, and some of the way almost impassable on account of the mud and mire.\* On our left was to be seen a large prairie as far as the eye could see. We kept in the woodland near the prairie and travelled about five miles farther (through rather poor land) where we found an Indian village.† In the last distance met an Indian and two squaws, and lost our way, the trail being new and very faint, but we found it by observing the twigs broken.

I had the pleasure and honor of shaking hands with the old chief, Nic-sa-mah. He enquired of Louis where I was from, and what my business was at home. Louis told him I kept a "big store," which he understood, but he did not know anything about the country that I lived in. A pretty young squaw roasted some corn for us but she did not have courage enough to give it to us. An old one gave it to Louis and he gave it to me. I was completely astonished with their appearance at home—so very dirty, and their wigwams so small, covered with bark, and the little Indians staring as if they had never seen anyone before. Fire in front of the wigwam. Two stakes with a pole across and a chain to hang on the kettle. A separate post with prongs on it to hang up the frying pan and pail, etc. Heard the Indians yelling in the woods. After resting a short time we bid Nic-sa-mah "Bosheau," which means "goodbye," and "how do you do," and proceeded on our journey. Passed across a fine rich prairie covered with a great variety of the most beautiful flowers, some on stalks higher than I could reach from my horse, and those resembled the sun flower in New England, only not quite as large. I gave them the name of the "Prairie \*The Skokie Marsh.

†Albert F. Scharf, who made a careful study of Indian village sites and trails along the North Shore, located several villages of historic times on both sides of the Skokie Marsh. If Benton was reasonably accurate in placing the distance from Ouilmette's cabin to this village at seventeen miles, the village stood on the site of the Fred Clavey Nursery in Highland Park. Scharf located a village on the high ground south of Clavey Road and east of the Edens Highway. The Scharf maps and data are in the Chicago Historical Society.

Sunflower," but I don't know how long they will retain the name. It was about four miles across this prairie and it is no doubt a continuation of the one I had before seen, as it extended to the south farther than I was able to see.\*

From this prairie it is about two miles through heavy timbered land to the O'Plain River (or des Plaines).† Here we let our horses feed upon the prairie grass, and fed ourselves upon crackers and maple sugar. After resting, forded the river (which was not very deep), and came out on a low prairie where the grass was higher than my head. Soon rose onto the dry prairie which was a grand one, and very rich indeed. Followed up the river, and while travelling along I perceived at some distance two white flags, which Louis said denoted an Indian graveyard. It was on the bank of the river and in a very pleasant and delightful spot. There were only three graves, one entirely new, not having a flag; the other two had small white flags on long poles at the head of the graves. One had the addition of a small stake about three feet high, painted red around the top, some characters, and the figure of a goat in red. This, Louis said, denoted the grave of a chief. The new grave, we learned from Indians soon after, had just been occasioned by the death of an old Indian called in English "White Dog." They said that they saw us come onto the prairie just as they were going off.

It was but a short distance before we came in sight of a wigwam, on the top of which I perceived something of a red cast. As I approached nearer I found them to be some Indian children who had crept up there to have a view of us. They were naked and dirty, and I was struck with astonish-

\*A prairie south and west of the present town of Deerfield. Elijah M. Haines, Lake County's first historian, called it "Grand Prairie." *Historical and Statistical Sketches of Lake County* (Waukegan, 1852), 81.

†The distance given—six miles—from Nic-sa-mah's village to the Des Plaines River agrees perfectly with our present maps. The two travelers followed a trail which led west through Deerfield along the course of the present Deerfield Road, branched off near the Orphans of the Storm dog refuge, and followed Riverwoods Road to the river. Scharf's maps indicate that two important Indian trails crossed at this point, which was doubtless the location of a good ford.

ment to see such a filthy looking set of beings. I could not have believed what I saw, had it only been told to me. We rode up to the wigwam and halted. Presently an Indian came up with a gun and we got off from our horses, tied them together and went into the wigwam. There were three squaws standing outside looking like so many "gauchy" school children gazing at a stranger. They were dressed in a long and [ *illegible* ] blue frock or petticoat, blue gaiters, and a dark blue calico short gown fastened in front with a large, round silver ornament. The inside of the wigwam was a very dirty place. On each side of the door space there was a little counter raised about one or two feet from the ground, covered with sticks and flag mats on which the Indians slept. In the center on the ground was a fire which filled the wigwam full of smoke, and almost suffocated me. An old squaw came in and sat down in the dirt and commenced doing some work, and she looked so old and worn out with hard work and old age that it made me feel very unpleasantly, and to think that she must soon die in such a comfortless place, without the comforts and conveniences and necessities of life (at her age). It affected me very much, and I could hardly restrain tears from falling. On one side lay a young Indian who seemed to be sick, and on the other side was a little papoose wrapt partly in a blanket to keep him on the counter, and such a dirty, funny-looking fellow I never saw before. If he had been seen with a caravan of animals no one would have doubted to what species he belonged. Yet all would have been mistaken.

From this wigwam it was about half a mile to the village, where we soon arrived.\* We rode up to the village, got off from our horses, took off the saddles and bridles, and let our horses loose after hobbling them. The Indians and squaws at the wigwam where we stopped, were sitting about on the ground. The men idle and the squaws were engaged cutting bark, for what purpose I did not learn. One of them brought a flag mat for us

\*The village of Met-tay-wah (or Mettawa) was located near Half Day, presumably south of the present Half Day Road and close to the point where Indian Creek flows into the Des Plaines River. The area abounds in Indian artifacts.



to sit down on, which we did, myself rather awkwardly, I am sure. Even to this time there had not been a word said on either side, and I thought it very strange, for I knew that Louis was well acquainted with them and had lived and traded with them when hunting on Spoon River and other places, but he had never been among them in this part of the country before. I found, however, that this singularity and coldness was not strange, for it is a part of the Indian character not to make any parade. They do not have any forms and ceremonies to go through with. Their greetings are all silent as the grave, yet they may be warmer than the warmest expressions of the false-hearted white man.

Louis soon commenced conversation with them and presently a squaw brought us some supper. In a tin cup was some pork fried, and also some nut cakes fried in the fat of the pork, no doubt, and the cakes were as fat as the pork. In another dish was some corn and beans, with but one ladle of wood, the bowl of it about six inches by four. I thought it a little too large to feed a horse with. The gravy would run down each side of my mouth in torrents, but I soon got used to it, so that I could suck it into my mouth as well as *any* Indian. I eat but little of the corn and beans, for I could not bear it. Louis told me that the Indians liked to have folks eat a great deal, and the more they eat the better they liked and the braver they thought them, and I eat till I could not eat any more, and it almost killed me to crowd so much down.

The name of the chief of this village is Met-tay-wah.\* He is about sixty years of age, and is a very sensible looking person. Louis gave him some tobacco, which he distributed to the rest, but not till after all had smoked from the whole stock. The young Indians wanted to run with me but I declined the honor on account of fatigue, and of feeling some unwell. The older ones played Moccasin for my amusement (not much of a game).†

\*Me-tai-way (thus) was one of the signers of the treaty consummated at Chicago on September 26, 1833. Andreas, *History of Chicago*, I, 125.

†"There are two parties to the play, several on a side, one playing against the other. There are three moccasins used for the purpose. One man takes the ball or stick between his thumb and forefinger, and slips it from one moccasin to another sev-

They played cards most all the time and smoked *all* the time. I took the gun and went out just before dark and tried to find some pigeons, but was not successful. The Indians told me, through Louis, not to venture a great ways as there was danger of my getting lost.

The Indians of this village were painted and looked more savage, and they were very lively and sociable; wanted me to repeat their words after them, which I did, and it would please them very much if I made a mistake, but I did not care as long as it amused them. One of the Indians made a mistake in playing cards; another said (every English word he could say), "No good Indian," and they seemed to be full of these jokes and sport all the time, and I began to like them very much. We did not go into the wigwams at this place. Our lodging place was on a little platform about six feet from the ground, without any covering but our blankets. It was a clear, chilly night. The pork and nut cakes were frying in my stomach and I could not sleep. I watched the moon until it disappeared and then counted stars until daylight.

This village is situated in a little grove of timber on the prairie, and near the Des Plaines River and near a little creek. The land is excellent about it, and they raise good corn. The village is small, consisting of four or five wigwams.

*Friday Aug 23* ☞ We arose about daybreak, caught our horses, and commenced our journey without even thanking the Indians for our entertainment or even bidding them goodbye. We seemed to go off as if we were mad, but I did not feel right to do so. Yet I was obliged to be a sulken Indian. They will resent the offer of money. After having stuffed my-  
eral times, and leaves it in one of them, and then stops. The other side represented by one player then guesses under which moccasin the ball is hidden. If he guesses where the ball is the first time, he loses. Should the ball not be in the moccasin he guesses the first time, he can try again. He has now two moccasins for a choice, and has to guess this time which one the ball is in. If he is successful, he wins; if not, he loses, and so they have only one chance in two of winning." Elijah M. Haines, *The American Indian* (Chicago, 1888), 268-69. The Indians' version of the shell game?

self with so much corn, beans, fried pork and cakes, I have considered myself very fortunate in not finding another village until night.

We passed through a little grove onto a prairie and travelled north about two miles; then northwesterly about seven miles to a beautiful spring on the prairie, where we rested and refreshed ourselves, but I could not eat any breakfast. About one mile from this we came to a little brook on which was some very heavy timber, and near it was a little lake.\* After travelling about eight miles farther, across small prairies and through oak openings and the land not so good, we rested again at a beautiful little lake.† The Indians had had an encampment here but they had moved to some other place and we were almost at loss what course to pursue. We took the saddles from our horses and turned them out to feed, and Louis laid down and went to sleep. I employed myself about changing my stockings, which had become wet when riding through the high prairie grass in the morning dew. It was like wading through water, for my pantaloons and feet were completely soaked and I could not contrive any way to prevent it. I had another opportunity to get wet here. The horses being rather dry and the flies plagueing them induced them to wade into the lake and I could not get them out by any persuasion. Therefore I was obliged to go in after them.

I took the gun and walked round a little point of the lake in quest of game, and when I returned the horses had disappeared. I waked up Louis and after hunting some time we found them about half of a mile from the lake, and we determined not to turn them out again without hobbling them as it is rather dangerous for they might wander away but a short distance and we should never be able to find them again. And then to be in a wilderness so far from home would make us feel and look rather sorry if we had lost our horses.

I saw a number of loons in the lake but could not get a shot at them.

\*Either Gray's Lake or Round Lake and its companion, Highland Lake. The "little brook" was undoubtedly Squaw Creek.

†Cedar Lake. In this eight-mile leg of their journey the travelers had proceeded due north.



There is a small island in the lake which the Indians said was covered with small pines, but I was not able to distinguish them, it was so far from the shore. The lake was surrounded by oak openings, had a stony bottom and the water looked very clear indeed.\*

From this lake we travelled about one mile to another and a larger one.† Here was the remains of an Indian encampment recently deserted, and we were as much at a loss which course to pursue as before, and finally more so, on account of the number of trails which forked off to the right and left, but fortunately took the direct one. This lake was connected by a little stream, through a marsh, with another lake, and it was also connected with some other large marshes and small ponds or lakes which are great places for game.† We saw a large flock of wild geese, but we could not get a shot at them. Also saw some ducks and loons, and when we crossed the little stream between the lakes we saw some monstrous pickerel and other large fish. These lakes are surrounded by groves of oak and it is very pleasant about them. The land is not so good as the large prairies.

After crossing the little stream, which was somewhat difficult, we had a low marsh of mire and water to go through for about thirty rods.‖ Louis went forward and very soon his horse was flouncing and down he went, and Louis was mid-leg deep in the mire. I followed and soon found myself in a worse predicament. The horse flounced, his forefeet sunk in the mud, the saddle partly turned and off I went, with one foot hanging in the stirrup without the power to extricate myself immediately, and my back, and finally my body nearly covered with mud. I then thought "*attitude* was everything." I succeeded in getting up and getting my pony onto a little

\*The "small island," "stony bottom," and clear water make the identification of this lake (Cedar Lake) certain, since no other body of water in the vicinity has these characteristics.

†Fox Lake.

†The two men evidently followed the shore of Fox Lake north and west until they came to the narrow channel—the "little stream"—leading to Petite Lake a short distance to the north.

‖The marshy area between Petite Lake and Grass Lake to the west.



more solid foundation, and not liking the idea of wading through such a deep mire, I got onto my pony again; but I had not proceeded one rod before I was off again. I almost gave up ever getting across, it grew so much worse. Louis kept moving; sometimes his horse would sink into the mud and it was with the greatest exertion that he could extricate himself. After waiting until I saw Louis safe over, I took my pony by the bridle and led the way, and was soon safe and sound on the other side; and such dirty, muddy-looking fellows were never seen before, I presume. I could not have been hired to have gone back for fifty dollars, and I rejoiced to find ourselves safe, but my rejoicing was of short duration, for we found this dry spot but an island surrounded by tremendous marshes. While shooting some pigeons, which were very plenty on this little island, we accidentally perceived an Indian wigwam across the marsh from near the place we had just left, but we determined not to go back at any rate. We found that the Indians had had an encampment on this ground and it looked as if they had but just left it. We followed the trail to the opposite side where we had a view of some wigwams on the mainland, but there was an impenetrable barrier which we could not surmount without assistance from other sources besides our own.

On our right and left were two extensive marshes or lakes grown up with high grass, and through the centre was a river which I learned from the Indians to be the head of Fox River, which runs into the Illinois. In front was a little neck of water about sixty rods across, which connected the two marshes.\* On the further side was high grass and a muddy bottom and the water ten feet deep most of the way and some places more. After shooting a large sand crane Louis climbed a large tree and yelled "Indian" and was answered very soon, but it was nearly an hour before an Indian appeared with his canoe. He got almost to us before we saw him; the grass was so high, the way so crooked, and he came so still. He was a savage-looking Indian. His face painted black, and almost a naked body. We took off our saddles and put them into the canoe, got in ourselves, and led our

\*The main channel of the Fox River between Grass Lake and Fox Lake.

horses at the side of it. We paddled out into the stream, and we were obliged then to turn to the left and follow down some distance before we could strike for the shore on account of the high grass, and before we reached it Louis's horse crowded onto my pony and he sank; but we held his head out of water to keep him from drowning. He proved a good anchor for we could not move the canoe at all, and I began to think we should be obliged to let him go and save ourselves. However, I was disappointed, for very soon he gave a sudden spring and we were soon ashore.

The swimming of our horses was quite a curiosity to me, although I have seen horses swim before; but I never noticed them so particularly, and their snorting was very singular. It sounded so wild and loud & frightful. We met two Indians on the shore horseback, who led the way to the village which is situated in the timber land near and in sight of the great marsh.\* Here we took up our quarters for the night. Hobbled our horses and turned them into the woods. The Indian horses pitched a number of battles with my pony, but he would drive them all.

After driving our horses some distance into the woods we returned to the first wigwam. A squaw spread a mat for us which we improved. The Indian men were playing cards and the squaws were husking corn. Presently the chief of this village, whose name is "Warp-sa," in English "White Skin," appeared and shook hands with us. He is a tall, good looking Indian about forty-five years of age, and is a *notable* drunkard, whenever he can get whiskey enough—so says Louis, who is well acquainted with him.†

A very pretty little squaw roasted us some corn which I was obliged to refuse on my part, as I have not entirely recovered from my last night's meal of nut cakes, corn, and pork. But I did not go without a supper. We had killed six pigeons and a prairie hen in the course of the day which

\*The village was located on the high ground a short distance west of Grass Lake, "the great marsh."

†Probably Wapsé, "White Deerskin," who is said to have been responsible, in 1833, for the sale of the Potawatomi lands in Illinois and the removal of that tribe to Kansas. Alanson Skinner, *The Mascoutens or Prairie Potawatomi Indians*, Bulletin of the Public Museum of the City of Milwaukee, Vol. VI, No. 3, 408.

were finely cooked by the chief's squaw, and I can say that I never tasted anything of the kind so sweet, so tender, and so nice and so beautifully cooked. She cut a small piece out of each side of the breast, which made it as tender as any other part of the body, and which I thought a great improvement, and I thought it might be of some advantage to the *ignorant whites*. The same squaw cooked some corn soup on purpose for me, as Louis said, and out of politeness to her I eat as much of it as I could. It was very good indeed, but I felt very awkward eating it out of such a monstrous spoon.

The little squaw who roasted the corn for us I liked very well. She was the prettiest that I had seen, and she appeared different from most of them, and she was very *coy*, for I could not catch her eye without being very sudden in my movements. If I turned she would be looking serenely towards the sky, and I could not help thinking that she was some pure and sinless being whose noble spirit held converse with angels in a brighter world, far above the mortal things of earth. Her tawny complexion only made her more interesting, and there in such a wild place among such a rude class of beings; altogether, she seemed quite a Pockahontas.

After taking off my boots and stockings and hanging them on the wooden crane to dry, and putting on dry stockings and pumps, I felt like taking a little rest. An Indian gave us a mat to spread upon the ground for our bed, and with our saddles and portmanteau for our pillows, we laid ourselves down under a large tree a little distance from the wigwam. The mosquitoes troubled me so much that I was obliged to wear gloves, and tie a handkerchief over my head and face to keep them off, but that did not wholly protect me from their voracious appetite. And what was quite as troublesome and aggravating, it did not affect in the least their *eternal singing*.

It was a beautiful evening. The moon was shining bright, and very soon all was "*solemn stillness*" save the hooting of the owl and the occasional whistling of the raccoon. The Indians had retired into their wigwams leaving us masters of the field, and we—or I—laid down to dream of angels



and pretty squaws. I had been asleep but a short time before I was awaked by the loud laughing of some squaws who stood so near my head that I could touch them. I waked up Louis and found that the Indians had been disturbed by the horses getting into the corn. I supposed them to be ours and went down to the field, and after wandering about some time I saw an Indian but no horses, and when returning I met some more, but I could not learn whether they were our horses or theirs. I went back and told Louis and he went down and found that they were Indian horses. While he was gone I armed myself against the mosquitoes in presence of the squaws, and laid down again. And they laughed outrageously, which almost provoked me. I began to think them worse than the mosquitoes. Louis told me when he returned that they were laughing at my appearance, and the pains that I had taken to protect myself from the mosquitoes. They soon left us and we were soon sleeping again.

*Saturday Aug 24* ☞ I was awaked very early by the squawking of the ducks and other fowl, and could not sleep any more. It is the greatest place for game here that I ever saw. The ducks and wild geese and loons, sand cranes, and other fowls are continually passing this place. It seems to be their only thoroughfare. And these great marshes and the little streams and lakes must contain a great quantity of that cash article, *Fur*. It must be quite a home for the hunter—such a home as I should like, were it not so remote from friends and the comforts of civilized life. But I begin to think it rather hard work to be an Indian. To be a hunter is the same, and I think I shall give up the idea of being a hunter.

As soon as daylight I went in pursuit of the horses and found them about one quarter of a mile from the village. They had lived well, having found plenty of the wild bean, which the horses in this country are very fond of, and which will fat them very quick indeed. We rigged our horses and left without seeing anyone but an old Indian and the *pretty squaw* which I expected to dream about, but unfortunately did not.

Soon after leaving the village we came onto a beautiful and very rich



prairie, covered with grass and flowers, and surrounded by oak openings.\* Passed across the prairie which was about five miles and then travelled about seven or eight miles through oak openings of not quite so good land to two lakes, each about two miles square, divided only by a strip of land about four rods wide, and connected by a little stream.† The trail we were following passed across this strip of land between the lakes and it seemed to me like passing through the Red Sea on dry land. On each side was a dam or embankment formed by nature or art, which prevented the water from rushing in upon us, and I thought it quite a curiosity. It is covered with oak, maple, butternut, and basswood; saw a great many of the little frost grapes. We made a stop for dinner; eat some crackers and drank some sweetened water. Saw some Indians in a canoe crossing the lake. Louis yelled at them and they yelled at him. Found the bones of a large buck; took one of his horns and intended to carry it with me but found it too troublesome and throwed it away. Saw a great quantity of small shells washed ashore, which lay in little windrows like sand.

In about half a mile we passed a little bay in the lake, where we saw a large flock of ducks, but they were so shy that we could not shoot any of them. Soon came out on a rich and beautiful prairie which was about three miles across. After travelling a short distance in the oak openings, which were very good land, we came to the most splendid lake, and the largest that I have seen since I left Chicago.\* It has a smooth, stony bottom, clear, pure water, and it is surrounded by high banks covered with

\*This area, in McHenry County, is known as English Prairie. A group of Englishmen settled there in 1836.

†The Twin Lakes, named Mary and Elizabeth, in Randall Township, Kenosha County, Wisconsin.

‡Lake Geneva. The first recorded visit of white men to Lake Geneva was that of Juliette Kinzie and her party on their way from Chicago to Fort Winnebago in the summer of 1831, although it must have been known to hunters, traders, and early settlers long before that date. Mrs. Kinzie, like everyone, was delighted with her first sight of the lake. She wrote: "A shout of delight burst involuntarily from the whole party, as this charming landscape met our view. 'It was like the Hudson, only less bold—no, it was like the lake of the Forest Cantons, in the picture of the

the heavy prairie grass and the great variety of flowers which are everywhere to be found in this country. And the tall, scattering oaks with their rich, beautiful, and comfortable shades, added the finish to this charming and lovely spot. I became so deeply in love with it, and so much interested with its romantic and delightful appearance, that I felt quite unwilling to leave; and I did not, until I had selected a location for my wigwam, which was a gentle elevation in the beautiful grove and overlooked the calm and pure waters of the lake. It seemed the sweetest, the most calm, the most peaceful and retired spot that I ever saw.

Having admired this Elyseum for some time without feeling any more contented with my situation, I concluded to break the enchantment which chained me to the spot, and proceed on my journey. I succeeded, and soon after leaving the lake passed two very extensive marshes on our right, and in the center of each was a cluster of tamaracks which looked like the spruce swamps in N. England.\* They were much more delightful and beautiful on account of their rarity and situation, and I could but think what a view for a painter of landscapes, the marsh extending as far as the eye could see, covered with the thick high grass, and the little cluster of tall and bright green tamaracks in the centre, and the marsh surrounded by groves of oak extending on here and there. Altogether the view was most splendid and far beyond the powers of a painter to describe.

We passed some other small marshes and two small lakes in the course of three or four miles, and then travelled over heavy swells of land covered with the oak timber. Crossed a little stream of water and found the swells much more abrupt.† It looked as if there had been an earthquake

Chapel of William Tell! What could be imagined more enchanting? Oh! if our friends at the east could but enjoy it with us!" Mrs. John H. Kinzie, *Wau-Bun* (Lakeside Press edition, Chicago, 1932), 372-73.

\*The two travelers had come onto Lake Geneva at its eastern end, and then proceeded northward. These marshes border the White River north and east of Lake Geneva.

†The small creek was Ore Creek, and the mounds are located northwest of the town of Springfield, Walworth County. They are kames, or small hills of glacial drift.

which had thrown the earth up into high knolls, one of which I ascended, and from the top of it I beheld the most splendid view of land that can be imagined. In front was a low prairie or valley which extended beyond the power of the eye, and on each side the elevated land was covered with the green grass and the scattered oaks with here and there a little prairie to make out a grand variety.

The spot seemed to me as if it had *once* been a vast and extensive lake, and had been destroyed by some natural cause which left only considerable of a stream that passed through the centre of the valley; which stream I afterwards learned from the Indians to be a branch of the Rock River.\* We crossed part of the prairie and forded the stream, and after rising a little hill we had a glimpse of two little Indian boys who we overtook, and who guided us to the Indian village which was but a short distance. It is the largest village I have seen.† Situated on three little hills which centre into one hollow, where their corn fields are. The land is immensely rich and their corn looks well.

We stopped at the principal part of the village, from which I had a view of the other two parts, situated on two hills about one fourth of a mile distant. I have forgotten the number of wigwams, but all taken together it is the largest village I have seen except the one on the St. Joseph River in Michigan. It seemed quite like a New England village. The little Indian children were at play, and made quite as much noise as the N. England children, which reminded me very strongly of home and times past. I do not observe but that the crying, hollowing and yelling and screaming of the Indian children is the same as the white children, and quite as interesting and agreeable to my ears.

We rode up to the village, took the saddles and bridles from our horses, and let them loose, and took our seats on our saddles. Very soon the Indians gathered around so thick that we could hardly see out. As soon as we

\*Turtle Creek. The route had been west from the vicinity of the present Elkhorn.

†The topographical features locate this village in Section 21, Richmond Township, Walworth County.

were seen from the other wigwams the Indians yelled and very soon we were joined by the whole village—men, women, and children. The Indians all sat down on the ground, and presently an Indian brought us some fresh beef, boiled, which we eat without salt, after the manner of the Indians, as they never use any salt. Louis gave the old chief some tobacco, and after all the Indians had smoked from the whole stock, as before, he divided it as he thought proper. Louis threwed the tobacco upon the ground without any regard to the dirt, and the old chief gathered it from the dust with a smile, without saying a word, and seemed very much pleased, and so did the rest. The chief's name, if I recollect aright, is Schootay-naw-quam, and he is a very temperate man, never drinks a drop of spirit and uses all his influence to prevent others from using it.\* I was very much pleased with the Indians at this place. They looked more warlike and brave, many of them painted more or less, and I liked them because they seemed pleased to see us.

I had a map of the western states, that is of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and the Territories of Michigan & Northwest. I took it out to learn about where we were. The Indians gathered around and were very much interested to see it. They wanted to know, after learning the nature of it, where such and such places were. I pointed them out to Louis and he told them. They would ask what such a river was, the name of it; Louis could tell them in their tongue. They picked out the situation of their village by the situation of the river, and told how long it would take an Indian to go to Galena, which would make it about sixty miles.† And they also said that an Indian could go to the mouth of the Milwaukee and back in a day, and that is the way they reckon distances, knowing nothing about miles. They pointed to

\*We have been unable to identify this chief.

†On a straight line Galena, Illinois, is about eighty miles from Richmond Township, and the mouth of the Milwaukee River is about forty-five miles. Solomon Juneau, the early Milwaukee trader, had in his employ an Indian who regularly made the ninety-mile trip between Milwaukee and Chicago between sunrise and sunset, which would indicate that ninety miles in a day was a standard performance for an Indian runner.



places on the map and told what kind of land in such and such places; said that there was fine timber on the Milwaukee, and pointed out places west of the Mississippi where it is all prairie. It amused them and interested them very much, and so they interested me. I found by them that we had just crossed a branch of the Rock River, and I found by the distance from different places that we were some distance in the Northwest Territory.\*

The Indians here were playing cards, and even the boys were quite as much engaged in the same business; but the squaws were at work all the time. Here the Indians wanted me to repeat their words and try to learn to converse with them. I did repeat after them, but so incorrectly that they laughed at me.

After resting a short time we proceeded, although it was nearly sunset. Here we changed our direction and travelled nearly south. Soon came onto a beautiful and rich prairie. It was rather small, in the form of a square, and surrounded by the handsomest oaks that I have yet seen. Also passed through some splendid groves, the trees very tall and slim and without a limb for a great many feet.

Arrived at a little prairie containing about twenty acres and camped on the border of it, near a little stream of water that ran through it.† Hobbled our horses and turned them out; then made a fire with the limbs from a tree which had been shivered by lightning and prepared for the night. We eat some crackers & drank some sweetened water for our supper. Roasted a prairie hen which we had just killed, for the dog, and were about to lay down for the night when we heard Indians talking. Louis looked a little wild and said that we must catch our horses or perhaps we should never see them again. We both went in pursuit of them and found them across the prairie. I caught my horse and Louis's horse followed, but Louis stayed

\*Strictly speaking, the present state of Wisconsin was a part of Michigan Territory in 1833. Benton was probably referring to that part of the original Northwest Territory which had not yet been organized as states.

†This camp site appears to have been on Turtle Creek in the northeast corner of Darien Township, Walworth County.

back among the trees until I returned with the horses to the fire and tied them. He seemed to crowd one into the danger, if there was any; however, I did not have any great fears.

After his return we looked about us but could not see or hear anything, and were about to lay down again when we again heard them, and they seemed to be going round us. I took my station beside a large tree to observe any movement that might be made, while Louis laid down near the high grass, rolled snugly in his blanket—so snugly that you could not believe it contained a man. While I was standing by the tree, Louis observed to me that I had better take my hat off if I remained there much longer; it being of straw, he thought it would be a good mark to shoot at. I asked him if he thought that there was much danger. He replied that there were many Indians who did not know anything about our business and they might think us spies and intruders, and would take advantage of our situation; and he said that there were occasionally some of the Sauks and Fox Indians wandering about in this part of the country, and from them we could not expect much mercy.\*

I concluded to lie down and therefore prepared myself against the encroachments of the troublesome mosquitoes. I placed my saddle for a pillow, wrapped myself in my blanket, and placed the well loaded gun at my side for a companion, and tried to sleep, but could not. The moon had risen in all its glory, and I thought I never witnessed such a clear and beautiful night. I got up and looked about me and I could not but admire the moonlit scenery, so bright and splendid. I could not help thinking of that beautiful night that I visited Niagara Falls to see the lunar rainbow. The same feelings came over me, and it seemed to me that I was standing on enchanted ground. All around me looked wild and terrible, yet lovely and romantic and beautiful, and I really felt happy to think that I was so far from home and in such a place, surrounded by the western savages, and perhaps even then in danger of suffering from the power of their toma-

\*The Black Hawk War of the preceding year was still fresh in Louis Ouilmette's mind. He had reason to be apprehensive of wandering Sacs and Foxes.

hawks and scalping knives. There was something so novel and romantic about it that it dispelled every fear, and I really believe it would have been dangerous to the Indians if a dozen had attacked us.

In the forepart of the night we heard a good many strange noises, which Louis said might be Indians, for he said that they made all kinds of noises, and mocked almost every wild animal. However, the noises might have proceeded from some strange birds that we were not acquainted with, and from foxes and raccoons, and I have no doubt but what they did.

I was up and down very often in the course of the night. I could not sleep for the noise, although it was very still near us, save the stepping of our horses and their eating. But at a distance we could distinctly hear the the lonely howling of the wolves. Sometimes they would seem to be very near, and the owls accompanied them with their hoarse hooting, and so it continued until daylight. By the way, the mosquitoes joined the music of this interesting night with their eternal singing, and I was obliged to keep time for them. I never before have passed a night so interestingly, and so pleasantly. . . .

*Sunday Aug 25* ☞ Soon after daylight we left our very peaceable and comfortable encampment and proceeded on our journey. Travelled south-erly. Passed across small prairies and through beautiful groves of oak timber for about ten miles. We then came in sight of some lakes on our left.\* Very soon we descended from the high and rolling prairies down to a level with the lakes. Passed through timber land, timber consisting of maple, basswood, whitewood, and butternut. Land very rich. Crossed two beautiful little streams of pure water which run into the lakes, and near the mouth of one of them we saw a cornfield, and with considerable difficulty in crossing a low, wet piece of prairie we reached the cornfield. Here we found two wigwams, and three squaws who were engaged in husking, boiling, shelling, and drying corn. One of them looked very well, and would have been very pretty if she had washed herself in the lake close by. I

\*Benton evidently mistook Lake Delavan for two lakes.



noticed an improvement in shelling corn among the Indians. It is done with a clam shell which scrapes it off with great rapidity. We stopped here long enough for the squaws to roast us some corn, and then passed about two miles from this, through heavy timberland and through some very bad mudholes to Bigfoot's Village.\* Here we made a stop of about two hours, turned our horses loose, and took a seat inside of a wigwam on account of the oppressive heat of the sun. I took the liberty to lay down and go to sleep, and when I awaked, the wigwam was lined with Indians. Among them was one whose dress attracted my attention. He had on a hat with three wide bead chains round it. On each arm was two wide silver bands, bead chains around his legs, and he was otherwise completely dressed in buckskin throughout, without a stitch in his dress, the seams being connected by buckskin strings with the ends all left hanging. He was painted, and had many little silver ornaments in his ears. Had a rifle, powder horn and pouch, and in his belt was a tomahawk and scalping knife.

The Indians all seemed very pleasant and were very sociable. The old chief "Bigfoot" was absent and I did not see him. The village is situated at the south end of a lake or lakes, which are about six miles long and divided only by a little neck of land. The lakes are very handsome and the situation, which is a gradual descent to the lake, is beautiful, and the land

\*Big Foot's village was at the western end of Lake Geneva where Buena Vista Park is now located. Mrs. Kinzie described it as "a collection of neat wigwams" surrounded by gardens. *Wau-Bun*, 372. A more particular description is that of the Rev. S. A. Dwinell, who saw it in 1836, when the Indians left it for the West. "It had a council house made of posts set in the ground and covered with mats, near which was planted a signal pole some twenty-five feet in height. Their permanent wigwams were usually about ten feet in diameter. Some of them were square, made of posts and poles, fastened together with bark, and covered with slabs made from hollow trees, both on the sides and the roof. Upon each side of the wigwam was a platform some four feet wide, elevated two feet from the level of the earth, which served for a bedstead, while the fronts were used in place of chairs. They could, by this means, enjoy the warmth of the fire, which was made in the middle of the cabin, a hole being left in the center of the roof for the egress of the smoke. Other and more temporary wigwams were circular and oval, the frame-work being made of saplings and covered with mats woven from rushes and flags." *History of Walworth County, Wisconsin* (Chicago, 1882), 312.



about is very rich. The Indians wanted me to run with them, but I did not feel like racing, and therefore was unwilling to make a trial of my running powers. After eating some boiled corn which was prepared for us, we left and passed a short distance under a little bluff, and then rose onto a large and grand prairie. In a southerly direction there was not a tree to be seen, but on each side the oak openings seemed to be its boundaries, although here and there was a little neck of a prairie which would connect monstrous prairies, and there did not seem to be any end to the prairies. They extended in all directions, and many of them were nearly surrounded by the most splendid oak groves.

We travelled about ten miles on this large prairie. Killed a rattlesnake and a prairie hen. The rattlesnake was five years old and about two feet long, rather clumsy and very ugly looking. We were some time in killing him on account of the high grass, and we were obliged to hunt him very cautiously for the fear of a bite. The only way we could find him was to strike the grass, and if he was near he would rattle, and by that means we tracked him and killed him.

We made a stop at the remains of an old Indian camp which we found in a little grove. Turned our horses onto the prairie and went in pursuit of some water which we fortunately found. Eat some crackers, and after a little rest went for our horses, and they were not to be seen. We both started in different directions and I ran until I almost killed myself, but could not find them; and after all we found them very near where we left them, but we could not see them for the high grass. I felt thankful enough, for I had given them up for lost and supposed we should be obliged to continue our journey on foot.

From this place we travelled about six miles through oak openings. The oaks were straight and very handsome. I thought them the most beautiful that I ever saw. Just before entering the grove of timber we had a grand and magnificent view of Grand Prairie.\* It was a world of prairie imme-

\*The Grand Prairie includes most of Dunham Township in the northwest corner of McHenry County, Illinois.

diately in view. I was struck with wonder and astonishment. It was greater than the Falls of Niagara, and I viewed it with surprise and awe. Imagination could not begin to tell of the splendor and magnificence of the grand and extensive view of such a delightful, such a beautiful and lovely world, surrounded by the most pleasant groves and covered with the most lovely and sweetest flowers.

While passing through the grove we met a young Indian riding horseback and his pretty little squaw trudging along on foot. It looked rather singular, but I did not wonder after what I had learned and seen of the Indians. Soon after passing the young Indians we saw a large buck and doe, but they did not seem to be frightened at our appearance at all, for they moved off at common time only. After leaving the timber land we came onto the finest prairie that I have seen. A beautiful stream of water passed through the centre, which I took to be a branch of the Rock River.\* When we came onto this prairie it was sunset and growing dark very fast, and we were obliged to ride as fast as our horses would carry us to get to the Indian village. There were a number of trails, and we were liable to get lost; however, we happened to be fortunate and took the right one.

As we approached a little grove Louis told me not to speak or make any noise, but to ride as fast as he did. I was quite puzzled to know the meaning of it but complied without any questions. Very soon we came in sight of a wigwam. We rode up to it with great speed, but the Indians had seen us and hid themselves. Louis yelled but all the answer he received was the echo of his own voice. We were obliged to proceed, and Louis took my horse, on account of him being more speedy than his, and we went off into a full run, but we had not proceeded but a short distance before we met a young Indian horseback. Louis enquired of him the course to the village, and we proceeded as before. The young Indian, seeing us in such haste, was much frightened, and followed us to find out what the matter was. Louis satisfied him and he returned to his wigwam, the one we had just left.

\*The north branch of the Kishwaukee, which flows into the Rock River.

With considerable difficulty we found the village,\* and I am sure that I was very happy to find any kind of a resting place. We turned our horses out as usual, but they were a great deal of trouble to us. They had got a taste of the corn husks and we could not keep them away from them, and the husks seemed to be quite a bone of contention between the Indian horses and ours. However, I was willing to risk my pony with any of them, although he was hobbled. I never yet saw anything look so savage as he would; he would rear and jump forward with the greatest fury, mouth wide open regardless of the kicks from the Indian horses. His being well shod was a great advantage to him, for every kick was deeply felt, and he soon made himself master of the field. He was obliged to have a regular siege at every village, and he always came off conquerer.

Here they were all found home, but five squaws and some little boys and some quite young children. We took a seat in the wigwam, but I could not stand the smoke from the fire which was built in the centre upon the ground. In the course of the day we had killed a prairie hen, some pigeons, and a black squirrel. Louis asked one of the squaws to cook them, but he said she was not very willing to do it. I told Louis that I should like some tea. Says he: "Perhaps they can make some and I will ask them," and they answered that they could. I was very glad to hear it, for I thought that a cup of tea would do me much good; but what was my astonishment when a two-quart basin of sassafras tea was brought in. I did not know or even dream of anything else but *young hyson*.

Our meal was brought in in regular order. First, the prairie hen was brought in. We salted it with some salt which we had with us, and found it very good. Next, the pigeons were brought in, and all this time it was so dark that we only found our supper by the sense of feeling. Next was some bread which had been baked on coals, and which I saw made in my presence by a dirty squaw, altho' I did not know what she was about when she was making it. If I had, I am sure that I should not have eat any of it.

\*Probably the Turtle village of the Winnebago tribe, on the site of present-day Be-loit. Mrs. Kinzie and her party visited it in 1831. *Wau-Bun*, 377.

I thought it was rather tough and *gritty*, and I did not wonder at all, when I had a view of a piece that was left. Next we had some broth, but I did not like it. Next the squirrel was brought in, but I had forgotten about it, and supposed it to be part of the hen or pigeons and took what I judged to be a leg and began to gnaw, but I could not get any meat. I told Louis that I never tried to eat anything so tough. He laughed very heartily at my ignorance and said that I was trying to gnaw through a squirrel's hide. I found that it was true, and I give up the rest of my supper, except tasting a little of the sassafras tea. It was sweetened with sugar and was sickish enough to make a horse vomit. Their manner of dressing a squirrel is to singe the hair off and cook him with the hide on, and a person must be very hungry to eat one, and he must understand gnawing under a hide or he would certainly starve to death.

In this wigwam I imagined myself a large *ham* hung up in a smoke house, for I was surrounded by a dense cloud of smoke; and again I thought that I was weeping myself into a statue, for *tears, big tears*, rolled from my weeping eyes like dish water from a sink spout. At length the fire went out and we laid down on one of the little counters in the wigwam, and presently three squaws with some of the children came in and became occupants with us. Two of them camped on the same counter with us, *feet to feet*. The children cried some, and disturbed my slumber a little.

The Indians at this village has lost four horses within a week by the *sore tongue*, a disorder which is very prevalent among the horses in this country at this time. Louis's horse has got it so bad that he cannot eat anything, and expect my pony will have it soon. Here the squaws were engaged in shelling and preparing their corn for the winter. They look dirty, and the little children were completely naked. I saw a little papoose lashed to a board; a hoop was fastened to the board and came round across the breast of the child, with little bells attached to it for the child to play with. The men of this village were all on the Rock River gathering wild rice for the winter.



*Monday Aug 26* ☞ A very warm and pleasant day. This morning I practiced shooting with a bow and arrow, but I could not succeed very well in hitting the mark. Louis was very good; he would bring down an arrow lodged in a tree at almost every bend, and at two or three rods distant he would hit the end of a cob every time. The little Indian boys, too, could shoot very well, and I think that I could do very well with a little practice.

About eight o'clock we left the village after having passed rather a sleepless night in an Indian wigwam, and for the first time in my life. Two of the *beautiful* squaws accompanied us a few miles to put us on the right trail. Louis rode forward, the squaws next, and I brought up the rear. One of the squaws fell from her horse by the girth of the saddle breaking; she mended it very quick and got on without any trouble and rode along in high glee. They took a trail that forked off to the left, after giving us our direction. When they parted from us I gave the Indian yell, and they rode at full speed laughing very heartily at my imitation.

We travelled all day on a fine prairie, occasionally passing near a little grove. Saw some poplars mixed in with other timber, which looked very natural. The prairies are larger and less timber, and the prairies are very dry—no water to be found for miles—and I never experienced such a degree of thirst in my life. Altho' we hunted in every place where we thought there could be water, still we did not find any until about three o'clock afternoon, and then it was such water as I would not offer a horse in N. England. The warm rays of the sun seem to have increased on the great prairie. The dry and hot south wind felt like so much heated air in a stove oven. Every pore seemed to be dried up, and it was with difficulty that I could breathe. Never before have I suffered so much from heat and thirst. I could not help but think of the pure water of New England and how happy I should be for only one drink of its cool water to quench my parching thirst; but the thought did not seem to have the desired effect, and I felt almost willing to give up the ghost.

After passing through the point of a little grove we had a view of five

Indians going across the prairie. Louis seemed very anxious to overtake them, and not let them escape without having a talk with them. We rode our horses at full speed, and when passing through a little hollow the Indians disappeared and we could not find them, altho' we hunted some time for them. We afterwards learned that they were young Indians and hid in the grass, being afraid of us, seeing us coming with such fury. After we gave up looking we saw six other Indians on horses crossing the prairie in another direction. We took the trail that would be likely to meet them and arrived at their village soon after they did. Here we turned out our horses and concluded to stay all night.\*

The Indians were the most noble looking that I have seen. There were ten large hunters, or warriors, that occupied one wigwam, the same we were permitted to occupy. They were almost naked, wearing nothing but what is called a breach cloth. Their chief, whose name is "Ontac" (English Crow), is said to be the bravest warrior in their nation. He wears only a little apron in front, and he looked savage, indeed. It looked singular enough to see such great, noble, stout-looking Indians, so nearly naked, and they looked savage indeed, all painted so very singular.

Ontac makes most of the speeches, and is looked up to for that purpose by the rest of the Indians. He is about fifty-five years of age and has the appearance of great strength. He was a friend to Great Britain and fought on their side in the last war of 1812. He once killed an American sentinel with his tomahawk, almost within the gate of Fort Clark, and escaped uninjured, and it is said that he has killed many others at different times. Since the last war he has been a warm friend of the Americans, and last summer he would not be persuaded by Black Hawk and his party to take up arms against them; but he fought for the whites and fought bravely, and was wounded at the time Black Hawk was taken by a Sac Indian whom he killed almost instantly with his tomahawk. The wound was in his hand, which very much deformed it, the ball having passed through the centre

\*This village was located in what is now called Ohio Grove, three miles southeast of Sycamore in De Kalb County, Illinois.

of it. I liked Ontac very much,\* and I liked all the rest. They seemed to be more sociable than any I had seen.

Ontac had just returned from a hunt. He had killed two "wild dogs" as he called them, but properly named prairie wolf. They are about as large as a middling sized dog, I was told, and look very much like the Indian dogs. I intended to have seen them when brought in but I forgot it. Only the day before we were there Ontac killed a large buck and doe. He found them on the middle of the prairie, killed one at the first fire, loaded and

\*Also spelled Autuckee, Awnkote, Auntake, etc. Ontac, to use Benton's spelling, was a Potawatomi of considerable importance. He was one of several chiefs who attended a council of Sacs and Foxes, Winnebago, and Potawatomi at Indiantown (now Tiskilwa) in February, 1832, called for the purpose of forming a confederacy to make war on the whites who were then beginning to settle in northern Illinois. Ontac joined Shabbona in vigorously opposing the plan. N. Matson, *Memories of Shabbona* (Chicago, 1878), 92-94.

Ontac never wavered in his friendship for the whites. "When the Sacs and Foxes crossed the Mississippi in April, 1832, a son of Black Hawk, and Little Bear, a chief of some note, left the band at the mouth of Rock river, and came east, visiting many Pottawatomie villages for the purpose of inducing the warriors to become their allies. These chiefs came to Indiantown and had a talk with Autuckee, Meommuse, and some of the principal warriors, all of whom refused assistance." Matson, *op. cit.*, 95.

Matson had a less favorable opinion of Ontac's villagers than our traveler. "In the fall, after gathering and drying their corn, and burying it in their caches, where it would be safe for future use, they [the Potawatomi] would leave their village and scatter all over the country for convenience in hunting, with from two to six lodges in a place; some going to Green river to collect furs, others along the Illinois river and Bureau creek. There was a large camping ground, or kind of head-quarters, west of Princeton, at the mouth of Epperson Run. Their principal chief's name was Autuckee. . . .

"Once in so many moons they would have their religious feasts. On these occasions large bodies of them would collect together, kill some of their favorite dogs and roast them whole, and offer up sacrifice to the Great Spirit for their success in hunting; the exercise consisted in dancing and yelling. These feasts were frequently held at the mouth of Epperson Run. These Indians, as a general thing, were low and filthy in their habits, possessing (with rare exceptions) but few of the noble traits which sometimes elevate the savage character, and make Indian history worthy of record. However, they were peaceable and quiet, and lived on friendly terms with their white neighbors." N. Matson, *Map of Bureau County, Illinois, with Sketches of its Early Settlement* (Chicago, 1867), 14-15.

overtook the other before he could get off of the prairie. It was owing to his good horse, however.

This village is very rich in horses. I counted twenty-five in sight on the prairie and many of them seemed to be very good. They are very fat, kept so by the fresh grass which springs up when the prairie has been burnt over for the purpose.

Here the Indians were very anxious that I should come to talk with them, and I repeated all the words they wished me to. Whether I was a proficient or not, I was not able to tell; but I was well aware that my pronunciation gave them much pleasure. Anything that excited my curiosity pleased them. When we first rode up to the village I expressed some wonder at seeing the older Indians so naked, and after we went into the wigwam, Louis wished me to go into the next wigwam, which I did, and I there saw no one but the chief Ontac almost naked. As soon as I looked in the Indians all burst out into a violent fit of laughter, thinking that his appearance would surprise me. Louis had told them that I expressed some astonishment at their appearance, and they laughed at my ignorance or they laughed because they were pleased to witness my astonishment, or because they were pleased to be thought objects of curiosity. I am sure I don't know which, but I am sure they laughed.

After resting a short time Ontac brought in some boiled beef (fresh) which we eat without salt, and soon his squaw brought some boiled squash. They were about as large as small, thick cucumbers & about the color of them when ripe. I eat some of them but I did not like them at all; they were so soft and squashy.

Soon after, Louis gave Ontac some tobacco, which he distributed among the rest after they had all smoked from the whole stock. After Louis had talked over matters and things with them we all left the wigwam and the Indians took seats on the ground and went to playing cards, and I amused myself with some pretty little Indian boys, learning them to play ball with a large walnut. I first commenced with one, then placed another, which brought us all into the form of a triangle, and so passed the ball around;



then placed a third and formed a square. The play pleased them very much and we were honored by the notice of the squaws, who seemed very much gratified to see us, and they laughed very heartily when we made a mistake and let the ball fall to the ground, but did not have occasion to laugh very often, for the little fellows were very tractable and learned to catch it very well.

Louis played cards with the Indians and I found that he understood the game very well. I put up three figs of tobacco for Ontac and Louis put up three for another Indian, and they played to see which would have the whole. Ontac lost it. While playing, some young Indians came in with two large sacks of red plums which were excellent, and I eat as many as I wished. About sunset we all went into the large wigwam and soon the chief's squaw brought in a large wooden pan nearly full of boiled beef. There were ten large noble looking Indians besides Louis and myself to eat it, and the pan went away empty. Louis told me that I must not throw away the bones of a fowl or of any animal in their presence, for they would not like it, and I must not give them to the dog, either. So after eating I had some bones in my hand and I made a motion to throw them away & at the same time looked toward an Indian who saw me and stepped forward and took them. What he done with them I did not know, but Louis told me that they preserved them or burnt them to ashes.

After supper I was invited to run with some of the young Indians and I accepted the invitation. I run with a number at a time. We would all take hold of hands and run moderately to a certain mark, and then let go and run with all our might to the end of the race course. I outrun two, and I tried it again with them and one beat me. I then run with the other several times but I could not outrun him. The squaws were present and laughed as usual at my awkwardness, and the others seemed quite elated to think that they had beat me running, and they cast many jokes by way of Louis because I allowed myself to be outrun by so many. But I had some excuse; I was dressed and had on boots, and had not practised running, and they were entirely naked excepting the breach cloth, and had been

used to running. Let me be in their circumstances as it regards dress and give me but a little practice, and I am confident that I could outrun them. Louis could outrun all of them, but they were unwilling to give up without a number of trials. However, I was willing they should beat me, it seemed to give them so much pleasure; but I felt rather chagrined to think that I was so decidedly beat by so many, and in presence of the squaws. It was really quite mortifying to my pride.

After the racing I went into the wigwam and seated myself on a little counter, and was quite interested with ten Indians who occupied this wigwam. First the Chief Ontac cut up some tobacco and rubbed it until it was perfectly dry. Then he commenced and went through with a speech or blessing, all the time the rest were perfectly silent and did not move. After the blessing they all approached the Chief and filled their pipes from the tobacco which he had prepared and lighted them by the fire on the ground in the centre of the wigwam. I felt curious to know the meaning of it and went out to Louis to enquire. He told me that they were holding a council about something but did not know what.

I went into another wigwam near, with Louis and some young Indians, and remained there until the council was ended. We then went into the wigwam with the warriors and camped for the night. This wigwam was larger than any I have seen, and built different. It was in a square form, had perpendicular sides and ends, and a common house roof, door spaces at each end, two counters about two and a half feet from the ground on each side, and the fire in the centre on the ground without any aperture for the smoke to escape except at the door spaces. The counter was wide, and we laid with our heads towards the eaves, but it was not so wide but that our feet would hang over the edge of the counter. My place was next to Ontac, and I am sure I felt grand enough sleeping next to the bravest chief of his tribe, and his noble warriors on all sides; and in such a place, amid tomahawks and scalping knives, which were sticking in the posts that supported the roof, and in the corner stood ten beautiful rifles, tipped with silver according to the Indian taste. But notwithstanding all this show *war*, I slept soundly and arose the next morning very much refreshed.

*Tuesday Aug 27* ☞ This morning, previous to my leaving, the Indians showed me the skin or velvet that comes off from the horns of a buck at some particular time in the season, and wished me to guess what it was. I could not tell until they pointed to the horn which was hanging over my head, and they laughed, and I suppose it was because they thought they could tell me something that I did not know.

Louis's horse had not eat anything for two days and he was obliged to leave him and take an Indian horse. The night previous our horses would not stay on the prairie but came about the wigwams and got a taste of the corn, so that we were obliged to tie them and cut up some corn for them to eat. I went with an Indian after some, and passing near the wigwams, the Indian dogs would come at me with all fury, but I had learned to say get out, which in Indian is Ye-àe. The dogs seemed to owe me a great spite and I don't know but I should have been eat up had it not been for the squaw who watched the dogs and kept them from touching me. Their dogs are very fierce, and are the cause of some trouble to them. They will eat corn like a raccoon, which makes it necessary to put a string round their jaws to prevent their doing it. It is only done at night when they cannot watch them. The dog which went with us would eat corn when hungry. It was quite new to me to hear of a dog eating corn, but I am told that it is very common in this country.

Ontac's village is situated on a little elevation on the prairie. The land is excellent about it. A little stream passes through the prairie near the village, and there is a little grove near by. We left Ontac's village without a trail and travelled about twenty-five miles across a very rich and beautiful rolling prairie. On a large swell in the prairie I had a view of the prairie on fire, set by the Indians, but it did not make much blaze, more of a smoke. And I also had a view of Pawpaw Grove and Holl[*torn*] Sho-ma-naw-quā. The DuPage River the timber on it. [*torn*]\*—Shounly's Grove, where

\*It is apparent from the text that the travelers took a southwesterly course across what is now De Kalb County, and perhaps even entered Lee County, since they came within sight of Paw Paw Grove. At about this point they must have turned to



we soon arrived and found the old man at home.\* He is a fine looking Indian, rather dark complexion than most that I have seen. He is a great friend to the whites and warned the whites of the intention of the Sac and Fox Indians last summer, and if he had been adhered [to] the Massacre of Indian Creek would never have happened. He has two squaw wives and a great many children. He has a reservation of land from government of two sections of fine rich land. It is a grove of timber situated on a little elevation in the prairie. In front is a large & extensive prairie with a stream of water passing through the centre of it. I was very dry and told Louis to ask for some water. He told me to ask in the Indian tongue, which I did, and the old chief sent a little boy to get some.

I had got almost tired travelling among the Indians, and I had made up my mind to leave Louis as soon as I thought I could reach a white settlement in safety. I enquired the distance to a white settlement. Old Shoumly said that an Indian could travel it in so long a time, which would probably make it about twenty five miles. It was then about two o'clock afternoon, and I was quite undetermined whether to undertake a journey of twenty five miles without a track or trail to the mouth of the Fox River or keep

the southeast toward Shabbona's Grove. A small piece of the manuscript has been torn out and the remainder of the word beginning "Holl" cannot be supplied. The reference to the Du Page River, many miles to the east at this point, is inexplicable. \*Shoumly, more often spelled Shabbona, but also rendered as Shabonee, Shabonier, Shaubena, Chambler, and Chambly. Shabbona was born into the Ottawa tribe about the year 1775, but married the daughter of a Potawatomi chief and in time succeeded to the old chief's place. Early in the nineteenth century Shabbona was living in his own village in the southern part of present De Kalb County. In the War of 1812 he sided, reluctantly, with Tecumseh and the British, but thereafter he never wavered in his allegiance to the United States or in his friendship for the white settlers. At the outbreak of the Black Hawk War in 1832 he warned settlers along the Fox River and Bureau and Indian creeks of impending danger and thus saved many lives. He was rewarded with a tract of land at his own village, but lost possession through a technicality. A small group of settlers, in whom cupidity had not driven out gratitude, bought him a small farm near Morris in Grundy County. "There in his old age he ate the bitter bread of charity and pondered on the white man's gratitude." He died in July, 1859. Katharine Elizabeth Crane in *Dictionary of American Biography*, under Shabonee.



round with Louis. The old chief asked me to stay till next morning, but I concluded to bid them all goodbye and start off alone. The old chief marked out the direction which was a smoke that rose above the trees on Indian Creek,\* named the objects which I should find if I was right, and after eating some boiled squashes, settling with Louis and giving him some money to purchase some tobacco for the Indians, I bid them all goodbye and departed alone and without a trail.

The distance across the prairie to [*torn*] is about twelve miles. I followed the direction of the smoke and of two small groves; near the first passed the road from Chicago to Galena. Very soon after passing the groves the smoke disappeared and I was left without a direction and wholly unable to form one, for I could not see back. I however selected a tree across the prairie and trusted to fortune for the correctness of the course. I found it very difficult to follow my object. Sometimes I was going a different direction before I was aware of it, but it was not strange because in passing through a little hollow I could not see anything about me but prairie, and above me the deep blue sky. However, I succeeded in reaching the timber land on the creek about sunset.

I proceeded directly to the bank of the creek and there found an old Indian trail. Not knowing whether I had struck the creek too high or too low I come to a stand and held a council with myself, and after due deliberation and consideration I determined to pursue the safe course, and follow the trail down the creek. About two miles from the place where I took the trail I passed an old log house, deserted last summer in the time of the Indian war; also passed an old Indian camp and came to the house where was the scene of the horrible massacre of fifteen persons last summer by the Sac and the Fox Indians. The man who owned the house was a Mr. Davis. He was building a mill. Some of the friendly Indians had previously warned him and his family of the danger that they apprehended, and also all the families in the vicinity of danger. Davis, with his family and all the

\*Indian Creek, a branch of the Fox River, flows in a southeasterly direction and enters the main stream ten miles north of its junction with the Illinois River.

inhabitants in that part of the country, proceeded to the mouth of the Fox River, a distance of twelve miles, and there arranged themselves in some order for defense, and remained for a few days. Not hearing anything further about the Indians or their intentions, he with a few others ventured to go back and resume their work. After remaining there about three or four days, thinking all perfectly safe, they sent for others who returned to the number of seventeen in all, men, women, and children. Davis sent for his wife to come but she was unwilling, which offended him. He then wrote a letter to her, requesting her to come immediately or never to come. She obeyed the fatal summons, and the letter was found in her basket after her death, she having arrived just in time to meet a cruel death from the merciless savages. There were fifteen killed; two young girls taken prisoners, and one young boy escaped.\* It was supposed by those who assisted in burying the dead that the Indians did not escape without injury, for Davis's party had four guns, one of which was found nearly broken into pieces, and there was a good many spots of blood where it was supposed Indians fell. The bodies of the dead were dreadfully mangled, and some of them seemed to have fought for life with terrible desperation. The young ladies were taken in the first onset and hurried immediately away, and knew nothing of the fate of the rest. They were treated kindly by the Indians and were soon after redeemed by government, who made the Winnebago Indians agents and gave them ten horses for the purpose of redeeming them from the Sac and Foxes. After the exchange was effected and the girls safe in the hands of their friends, the Winnebagoes went secretly and stole the ten horses back again, thus leaving the Sac and Fox Indians without any recompence for their savage cruelty.

After a hasty survey of this place I proceeded to cross the creek, which I easily effected, but found it very difficult and somewhat dangerous gain-

\*Known in Illinois history as the Indian Creek Massacre. Benton's account accords with the known facts. The girls were Sylvia and Rachel Hall, aged seventeen and fifteen. The best account of the Indian Creek Massacre and the captivity of the Hall sisters is to be found in Frank E. Stevens, *The Black Hawk War* (Chicago, 1903). See also Matson, *Map of Bureau County, Illinois*, 31-34.

ing the prairie on the opposite side, on account of the many deep holes worn in the low ground by the water, which were hid from me by the high and thick weeds. I could not walk very well, and I hardly dared to ride, but by walking and riding I succeeded in getting onto the dry prairie, and was fortunate to find myself at the cornfield which was pointed out to me by old Shoumla. Daylight had disappeared, and I was quite undetermined whether to venture on to the prairie and pursue my course to the mouth of the Fox River, a distance of twelve miles, or to camp down where I was, and for once go to bed or to blanket without a supper. But I was not in a quandary a long time before my good fortune directed me to a trail which passed down the creek. I was not long in making my choice [of] which course, for I knew that the trail would lead on to the mouth of Indian Creek and from there to the mouth of the Fox, altho' a roundabout way; but I did not know where the broad prairie would lead me. I had followed the trail but about three miles before I came to a log house and I am sure I was very happy to find it, and very happy to see a white man again and one that I could talk with.

I asked if I could stay, the answer was yes, if I could take up with such fare as they had. I did not go into any preliminaries, but took the saddle and bridle from my horse, hobbled him, and turned him out on the prairie. I went into the house, which contained one room, and the room contained two young men and one young wife & a small quantity of furniture. They gave me a supper, such a supper as I never relished so well before. The meat was badly burnt, yet I loved it, and eat it with great avidity. Had some good *slapjacks* and a good cup of tea, and I began to feel at home—quite civilized and quite in favor of civilization. They had but one feather bed in the house, which was given to me on the floor, and I undressed for the first time for six days and went to bed.

*Wednesday Aug. 28* ☞ This morning I arose earlier than I wished to, altho' I had a good night's rest considering the supper and quantity I eat, but the family wanted my bedstead for a breakfast table to stand upon.

I did not feel in a hurry for it seemed like a day and time of rest. After breakfast I went with the young men to a saw mill which they had just put into operation on Indian stream. Wandered about the mill two or three hours, and found it surrounded by a good lot of hard timber, some white wood, ash, and bass wood, but upon the whole I thought the mill and privilege rather *small fish*. The whole fall is only about three feet and a half, and the saw moves as if it was just breathing its last. However, they think they are doing well, and they probably *are*, for when they get their lumber to the mouth of the Fox River, a distance of twelve miles, it will bring them twelve dollars and fifty cents per thousand.

The names of these young men were Warren, from Kentucky.\* They were driven away last summer by the Indians but did not leave until the night before the massacre at Davis's, three miles above. Soon after the massacre of Davis and party, these two Warrens with two others were scouting about to observe the movements of the Indians, and when two of the party had carelessly got off from their horses to gather some strawberries, the Indians fired upon them, killed one man, and wounded another, and the Warrens escaped unhurt.

I left about eleven o'clock and passed down the creek a short distance, then struck across to the falls on the Fox, about four miles from where it empties into the Illinois. Prairie all the way and very rich—a great quantity of plums which are very good indeed. Saw two ugly looking rattlesnakes; one had five rattles, the other three, which made one eight, the other five years of age, as they do not have any rattles until they are three years old.

There is a small grist mill at the falls on the Fox River, and one saw mill. There is also another grain mill building which will be completed next season. There is plenty of water for any purpose.† The river is a little

\*Daniel Warren Jr. and his brother Ezekiel settled on Indian Creek in 1832. They were natives of Madison County, New York. Elmer Baldwin, *History of La Salle County, Illinois* (Chicago, 1877), 436-37.

†John Mason Peck, the best authority on the topography and prospects of Illinois



larger than White River in Vermont. The bottom of it at the falls is solid, smooth lime stone. The channel having been cut or worn by the water (leaving the bank about six feet above the water) which is quite a curiosity. There are many holes worn into the bank which make it appear like swallow holes in a sand bank, only they are larger, many of them large enough to admit a man. There are high bluffs each side of the river at the falls, but a little below you have to rise but a few feet to get onto the prairie. I followed a little down the river until I reached the low prairie, and then struck across to the mouth of the Fox.

When I arrived in sight of the Illinois and the mouth of the Fox River, I thought that I had never beheld anything so splendid before. I felt a peculiar sensation when viewing so much magnificence. It seemed to me the whole world centered to this very spot & I was astonished with the richness and splendour of the scene. I stopped my horse upon a little eminence on the prairie to admire this beautiful, rich, and extensive view. Immediately in front and about one mile distant, was the laid-out town of Ottawa, with a few scattering log houses situated on each side of the Illinois and the Fox. On the south side of the Illinois is a high bluff about fifty feet which extends as far up and down the river as the eye could see. The land this side is a low level prairie about fifteen feet above the water in the river, which extends back more than a mile; then the land gradually rises about twenty feet onto a large, dry prairie which runs to Indian Creek north. This rise is covered with a beautiful grove of oaks and hickory, and has a most lovely appearance. The prairies are covered with tall grass and beautiful flowers, and the whole together is beyond description. The prairies from the north seemed to have been growing larger and more beautiful, and had been rolling on, clothed with their rich and beautiful

in 1833, wrote of this stretch of the Fox River: "At the rapids five miles above its mouth, are most extensive water privileges. Here the river is from eighty to one hundred yards wide, with the bed and banks of coarse-grained sandstone. The rapids are sixteen feet descent, and both sides of the river will admit of mills and machinery for three-fourths of a mile, with inexhaustible supplies of water." *A Gazetteer of Illinois* (Jacksonville, 1834), 240.

garbs to this very spot, here to display all their magnificence and splendour at one view; a view rich with the beauty and the loveliness of nature, such a view as would be beyond the power of a painter to imitate—or beyond the power of the most distinguished writer to describe.

The beautiful Illinois with its high and imposing bluffs on the south side, can be seen for a great distance, above and below, and on the north side can be seen the Fox River winding its way along through the prairies to its junction with the Illinois. There is a large bed of coal in the forks of the Fox and Illinois. The town of Ottawa is situated, or laid out, on both sides of the Fox & Illinois. The few buildings are south of the Fox River, which place is intended to be the principal part of the town. There are two framed buildings, one a store, the other a dwelling; also a few log houses. On the opposite or south side of the Illinois is a tavern, small store, and some log houses.\* The post office is kept in a log cabin about ten feet square. Forded the river at this place. Near where the ferry boat lands is a mineral spring, its powers not known. When I left Ottawa (which by the way I think will become a place of considerable importance in time) I took a road that wound up the bluff onto the great prairie. Here again the horizon rested upon the prairie, not a tree or shrub to be seen in an easterly direction. All prairie, prairie.

*Thursday Aug 29* ☞ Today I proceeded down the Illinois. About twelve miles below Ottawa the Big Vermillion enters the Illinois. The inhabitants were building a flour mill. They already have a saw mill. The

\*Ottawa was platted in 1830. Peck wrote of it: "It is laid off on both sides of the Illinois river. . . . At the town site, the water of the Illinois is deep, and the landing convenient. Steam boats reach this place in the spring, and at other seasons when the water is high. . . .

"The country around is pleasant, undulating, and well adapted to farming. The timber is in small quantities, chiefly in groves; the prairie land generally dry, and rich soil.

"Lime, and coarse free stone, in great abundance.

"Ottawa contains twenty or thirty families, three or four stores, and is populating fast." *Gazetteer of Illinois*, 302.

banks of the Vermillion are filled with coal. This place is about four miles from the Illinois River.\* I was told that salt springs had been found in the vicinity. About three miles from this place I stopped at a log house, got some oats for my horse & some bread and milk for myself. I passed about two hours very pleasantly with the old man who owned the habitation. He was a very sociable sort of a man, told me all he knew about the country *and more, too*, I presume. His wife was sick with a sick headache; she complained much of the climate, said she had been sick ever since she had been in this country.

Heard of Doct. Whipple, who was once one of our representatives in Congress. He left this place a few days previous to my being here; was travelling with a pack on his back; was steady but had been rather wild. This day I travelled twenty-six miles, nearly all the distance through prairie, occasionally passing through a little neck of a grove. It is settled all the way. The settlements are all in the timber land; their cultivated fields are on the prairie. The great object of settlers is to secure as much of the timber land as they can, knowing that ages must pass away before they will want for prairie. Their grain is all harvested and stacked. No barns; log houses. Corn looks fine, from ten to fifteen feet high. Staid at a house situated in a delightful grove. Great quantities of plums . . .†

\*Benton was now traveling south along the Vermilion River, although the text is by no means clear on this point.

†With this incomplete sentence the journal ends. By his reckoning Benton had covered thirty miles since leaving the junction of the Illinois and Vermilion rivers. Since he did not indicate explicitly his direction, we can say no more than that his journal came to an end when he had reached some point on an arc extending from the Illinois River opposite Henry, through Minonk in Woodford County, to Cornell in Livingston County. The towns, of course, were not in existence in 1833.

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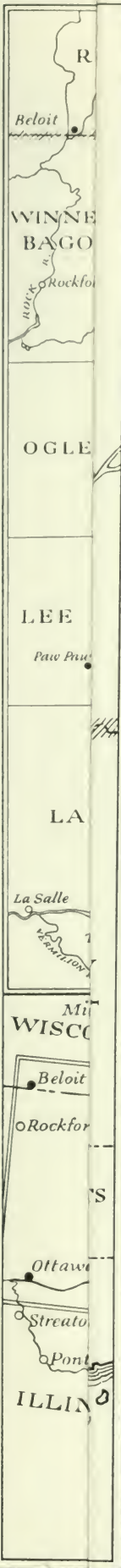




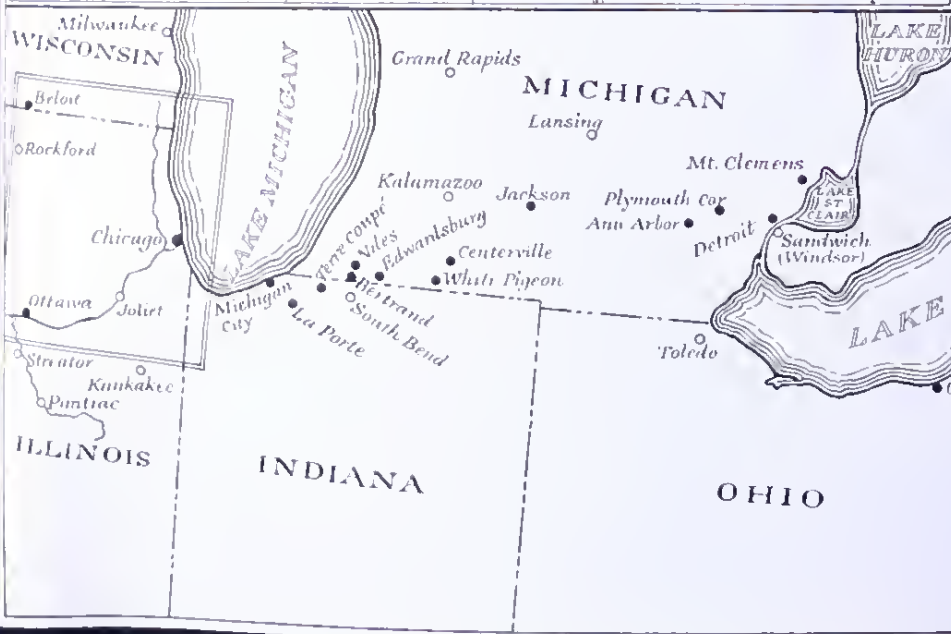
## *Colophon*

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# MAP OF BENTON'S ROUTE "TO THE FAR-OFF WEST"



- EXPLANATION**
- Towns on Benton's route
  - Towns used for orientation





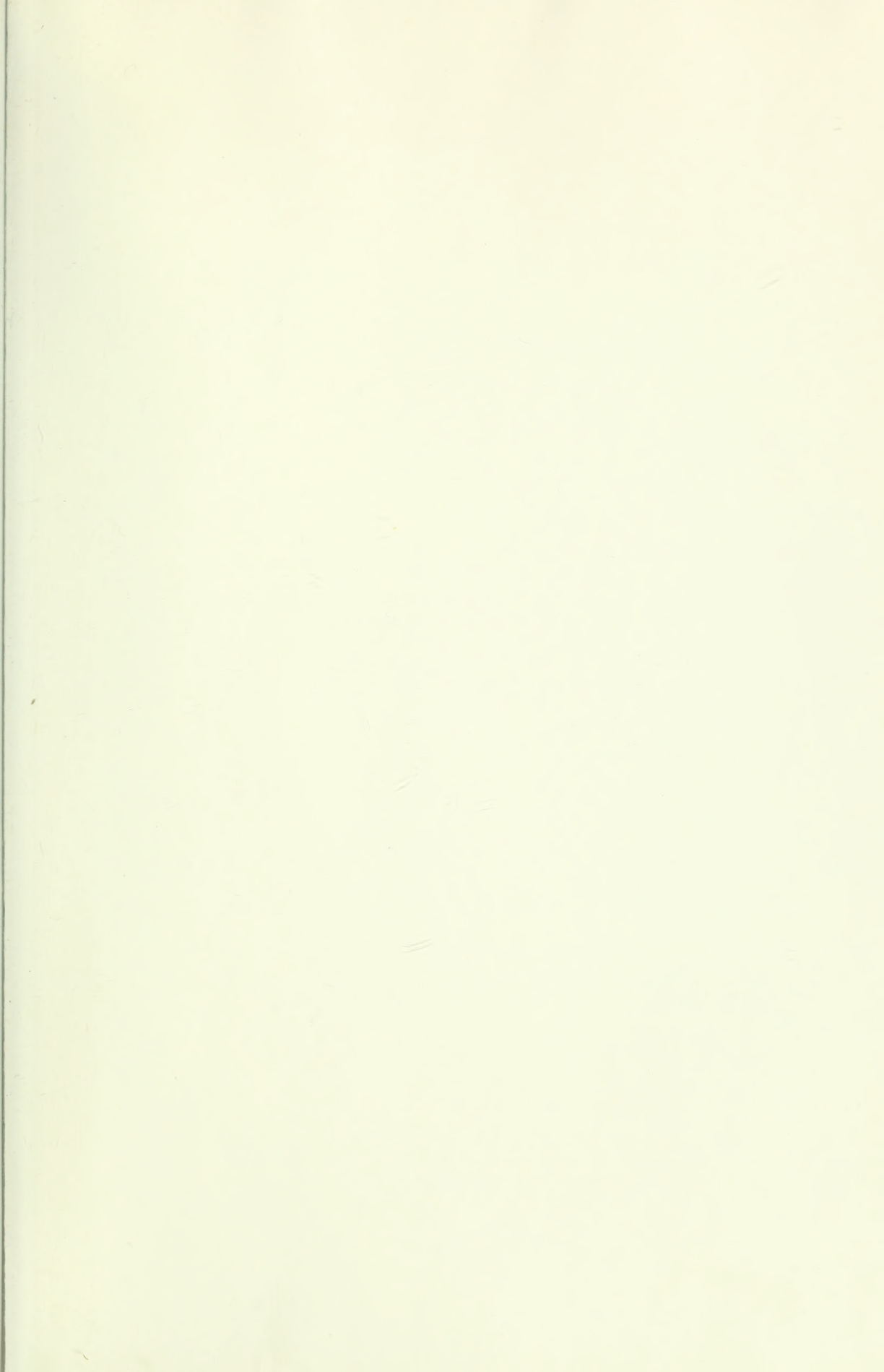


















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